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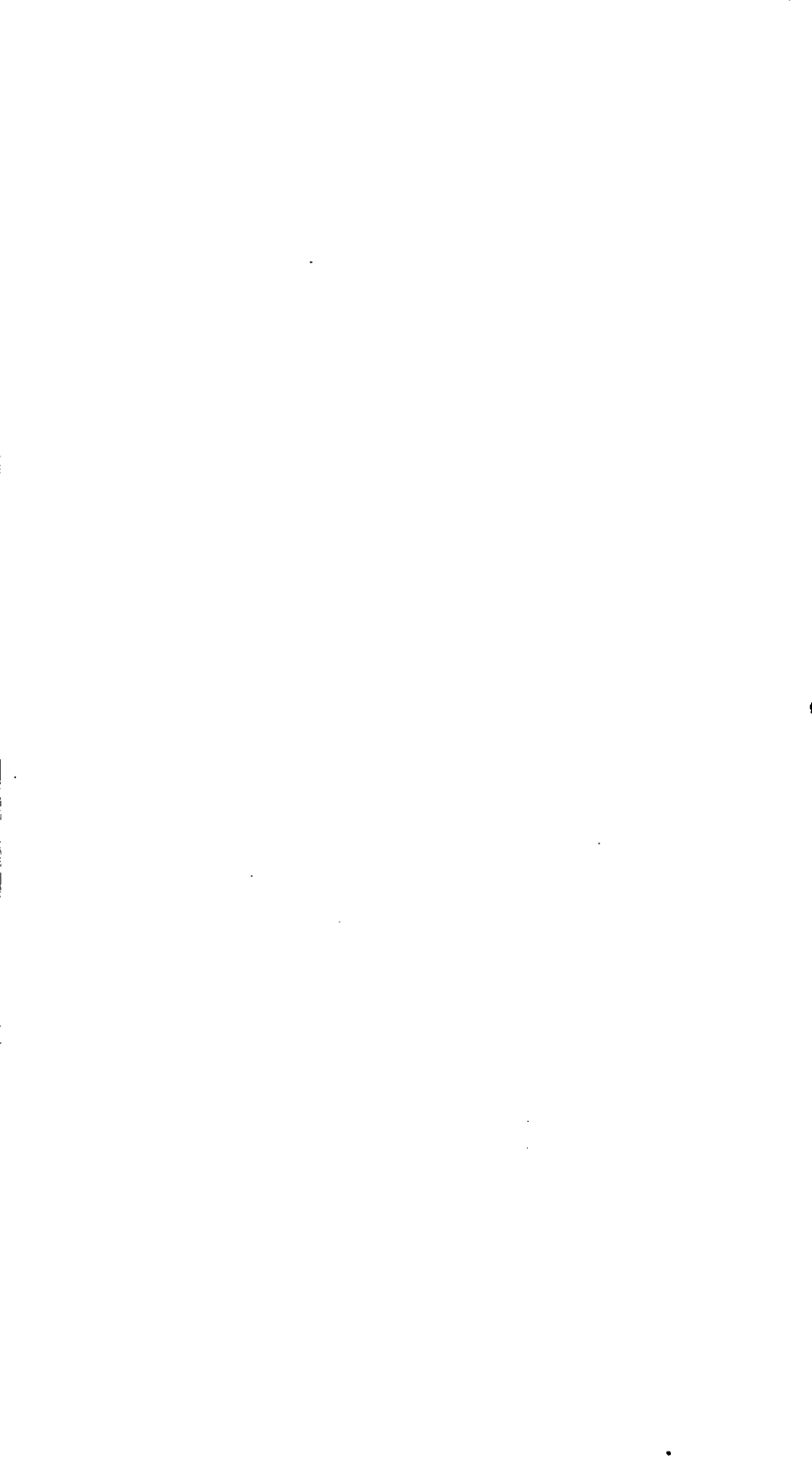


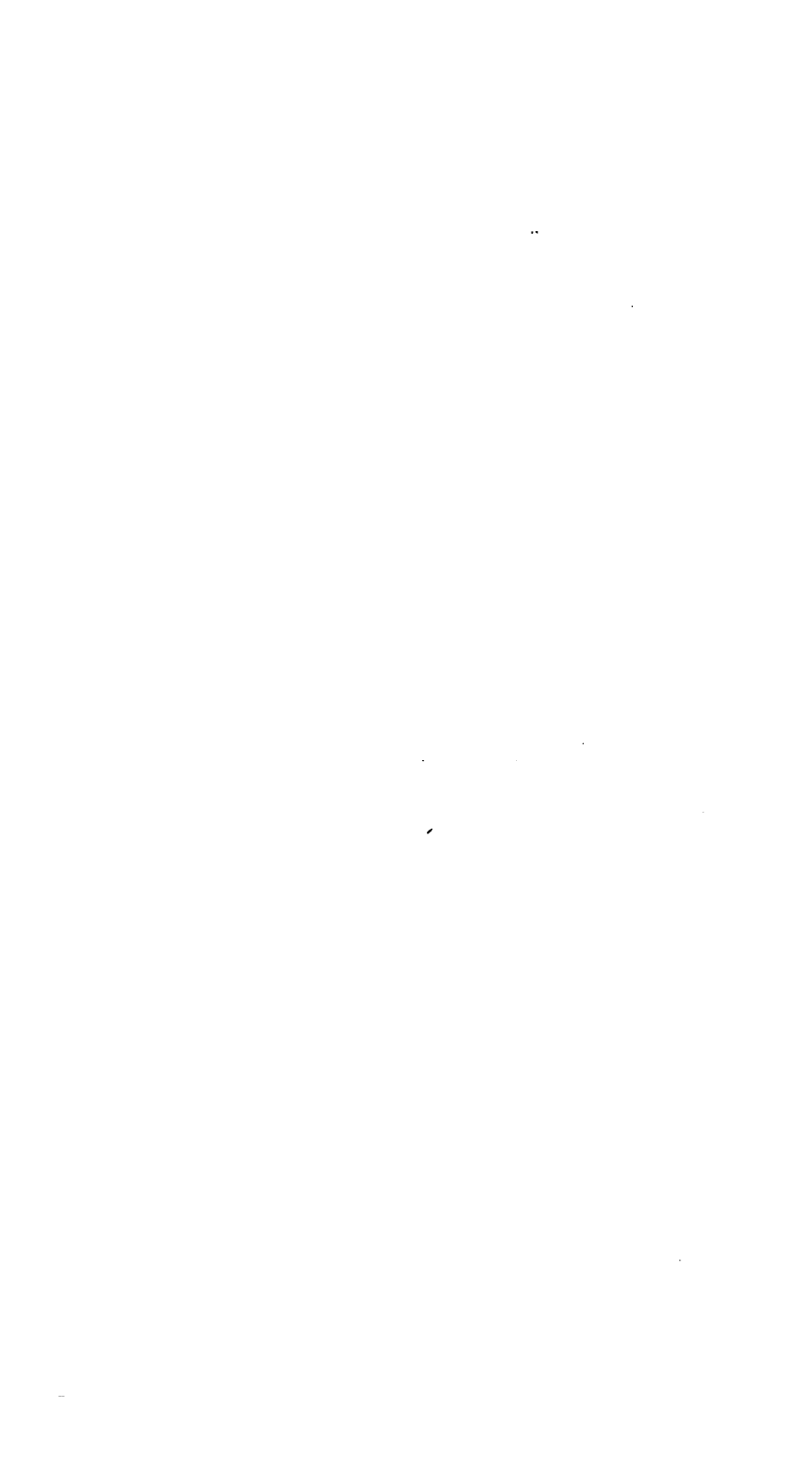
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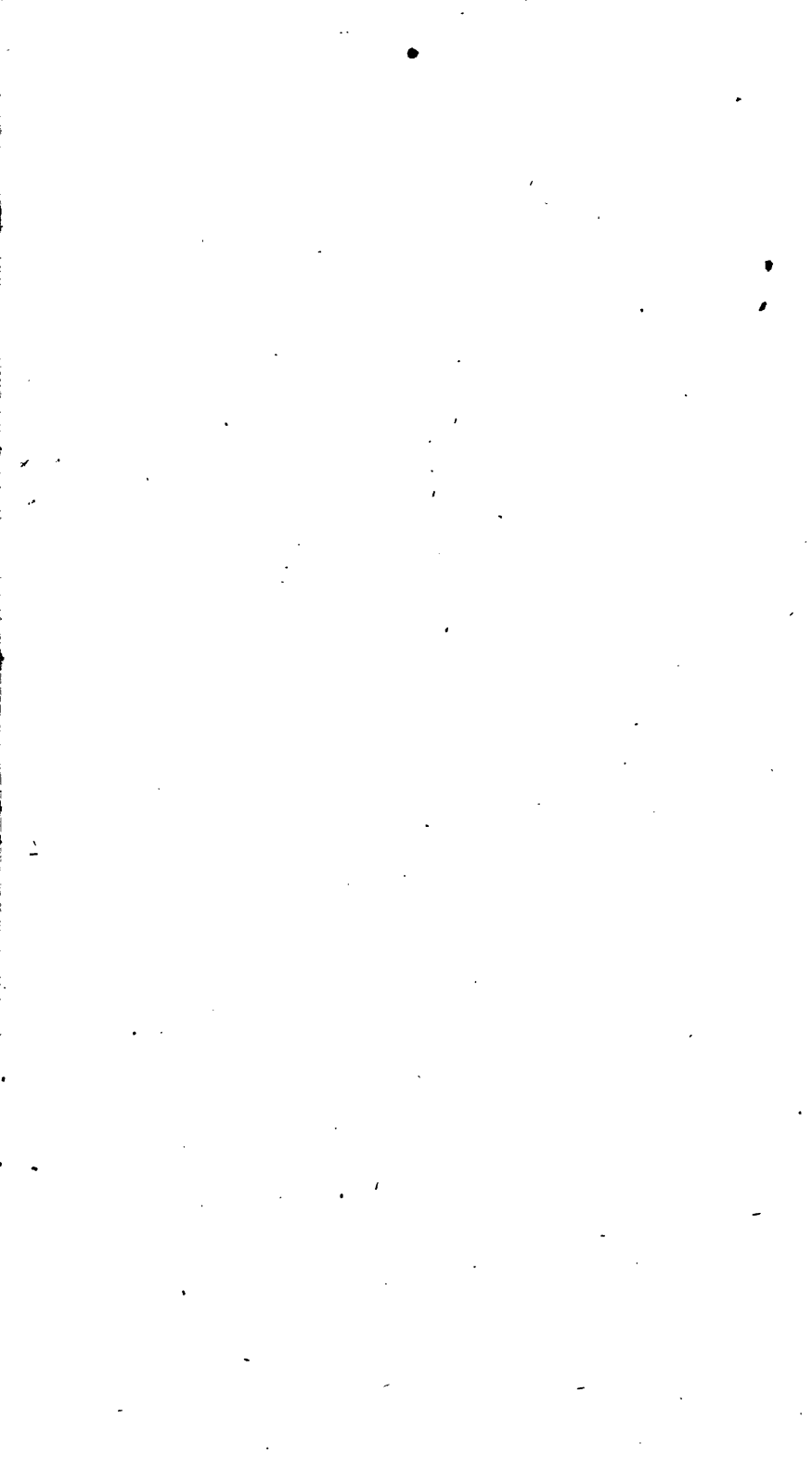






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**LETTERS**

**FROM**

**GENEVA AND FRANCE.**





# LETTERS ✓

FROM

## GENEVA AND FRANCE ✓

WRITTEN

DURING A RESIDENCE OF BETWEEN TWO AND THREE YEARS,  
IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THOSE COUNTRIES,

AND ADDRESSED

TO A LADY IN VIRGINIA.

---

BY HER FATHER.

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VOLUME II.

Je dirai : J'étois lu telle chose m'avint :  
Vous y croirez & y croirez même.

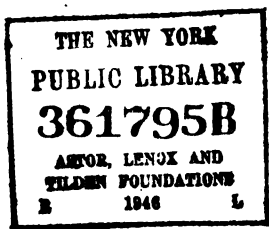
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# LETTERS

FROM

## GENEVA AND FRANCE.

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### LETTER LX.

MY DEAR E —,

IF you cast your eyes on the plan of Paris, you will easily find in the north-west corner of it, the street of the Ferme des Mathurins; suppose me setting out thence, and passing by the streets des Mathurins and Caumartin, as far as the Boulevards, crossing them, and proceeding by the street des Capucines, as far as the opening of the Place Vendome. On the right is the Place Vendome, from which a street leads into the street St. Honoré, on the other side of which a passage has been made through the ruins of the Capuchin Church and Convent, to a door which opens into the Gardens of the Tuileries; near this door, was the extremity of

Canner June 3, 1946 - 2v.

the riding school, where the Convention sat when Louis XVI. took shelter on the 10th of August, with his family ; and it was here that he was afterwards so unjustly condemned to death. Another opening has been made to the left, from the spot I supposed myself arrived at, in the street des Capucines, which communicates with the Boulevards, over the place which was formerly covered by the Convent and Garden of the Capucine Nuns. A community of pious women, who, like the Beguines of Flanders, and the Soeurs Grises, and Soeurs de la Charité, and the Hospital Nuns of other denominations, devoted themselves to the cause of suffering humanity in all the various retreats of misery, and with a zeal, which no earthly motive could have inspired. They went barefooted, and lived altogether upon vegetables, whilst whatever they could collect from the contributions of the pious, chiefly for the benefit of the poor, whose children they at the same time endeavoured to bring up in habits of industry and virtue, teaching them to read and giving them the rudiments of religion, and encouraging the parent to put them in some way of making their bread honestly. At the suppression of the religious houses, a part of their Convent was converted into a manufactory of assignats, and millions continued to flow thence, until a pound sterling was equivalent to 18,000 livres ; the other parts were let out for taverns and retail stores, for puppet shows and panoramas, and for the Amphitheatre of Franconi, while the idle boys of the neighbourhood found amusement in what

... 4 Y H

remained of the gardens. A few steps along the Rue des Capucines (I wish you would allow me, for the future, to say Rue, though as an Englishman in one of Foote's plays observes, it is a very strange way of calling a street) a few steps then, along the Rue des Capucines, would bring one into the Rue des Petits Champs, and a few more, to the corner of the Rue d'Antin, to the spot where the fatal duel took place in the minority of Louis XIV. between the two brothers, the Dukes of Nemours and of Beaufort; the first, who would listen to no terms of accommodation, was, as it should seem it ought to have been, the one killed. You must now follow me in imagination, through the Place Vendome, into the Rue St. Honoré, so distinguished for elegant shops of every sort, and proceed as far as the Church of St. Roch; this spot was originally a small circular hill, at a little distance from the walls of Paris, in which it was not included till the time of Henry IV. or Louis XIII. It was here, that in the year 1429, the celebrated Maid of Orleans stood, and pointed a cannon against the town, then in the hands of the English; it was for many years occupied by a windmill, but a handsome church was at length erected there, and it was from the steps of this church, that a glazier's wife, passing early on a winter's morning, took the poor little infant, not a day old, who was afterwards known in the world by the name of D'Alembert. He was a profound and distinguished geometrician, an elegant writer on subjects of lighter literature, and a good-humoured, humane and generous man: one of his parents, Madame de Tencin, who had

never lost sight of him, wished at length to have acknowledged him publickly as her son, but he chose, that the celebrity which he had now acquired, should shed all its lustre upon the good woman who protected his helpless infancy ; he would never quit his lodgings at her house, or have any other mother, was his expression, but the glazier's wife. She survived him, and her old age was rendered comfortable, by the little fortune which it was in his power to leave her. This Church of St. Roch is also remarkable for another event, of which it bears evident memorials upon the whole of its front. It was early in 1795, that the remains of the Jacobin party, who had a majority of the citizens in their favour, and who were strengthened by a large accession of concealed royalists, began to recover from their defeat of the 9th Thermidor, of the year before, and to avail themselves of the fluctuating pusillanimous conduct of the Convention, whom they insulted in every manner, and at length attacked with an armed force. Menou had been sent against them, and Barras was next appointed general ; but he had the good sense to let the command devolve upon a young man, lately made a brigadier of artillery, who had distinguished himself at Toulon, and who was known not to be too tender-hearted for a similar employment ; this was Bonaparte, who approaching the church of St. Roch by the narrow passage of the Rue de Dauphin, drove the opposite party from it with his artillery, and cannonaded them without mercy, in every part of the city, wherever they ventured to

show themselves: several thousands of the citizens lost their lives upon the occasion. The Parisians are said never to have forgiven the execution of this day, which is called in the History of the Revolution, the 13th Vendemaire. It was along the Rue St. Honoré, that the unfortunate Queen of France was conducted to the guillotine, in 1793. I have seen a letter from a young Genevan to his father, in which was the following paragraph: "I was standing with many others, upon the steps of St. Roch, when the cart came by; it was a common cart, such as is made use of for carrying criminals to execution. The Queen was seated in it, with her hands tied behind her; her eyes were swelled, from the tears which probably she had shed the night before, but her air was composed, and her looks erect; she was decently dressed in white, and had on a close cap; a confessor was seated beside her, but she did not appear to have any conversation with him." The world is in some measure, at length, undeceived with respect to this unfortunate princess; she had defended herself with the courage of innocence, before the infamous tribunal, but was prepared to meet her fate; the amusement of her few last days, was to knit a purse from the yarn of the tapestry that lined her chamber; she herself ironed the gown she was to wear, and expressed no fear, but that the hatred of the people would not suffer her to reach the scaffold. If I were once to give way to what rises in my mind, upon this subject, my description of Paris would never be finished. Suppose yourself now to have

proceeded along the Rue St. Honoré, as far as the Palais Royal; this Palace was built by Cardinal Richelieu, and afterwards presented to the King; and it was hence that Anne of Austria was driven with her children, at the time of those commotions which were excited by the Cardinal de Retz; it was given to the family of Orleans by Louis XIV. ; and it was the last duke of that name, one of the most unprincipled, and yet most timid; the most avaricious, and yet the most expensive of men, who gave to the building, and to the garden, their present form. The garden is about 250 yards long, and about 100 broad, with triple avenues of young trees on each side, and an open space along the middle, and is enclosed on three sides with a row of lofty and uniform buildings; there is an open portico on the ground floor, and the whole is let out to a variety of people, who all contribute in their way, to the enjoyments of the Capital. Watchmakers, jewellers, painters, booksellers, milliners, auctioneers, changers and lenders of money, sellers of every article of dress, from cheap shoes, to the most beautiful artificial flowers; venders of all sorts of fruits and undrest eatables, restaurateurs and confectioners succeed each other, and there are toyshops and gaming houses, cabinets of natural philosophy, curious pieces of mechanism, and preparations in wax, to engage the attention of a stranger. When the whole is lighted up at night, with 180 large reflecting lamps, and the crowds of those who come to see and be seen, are collected, it must appear like the games of Flora



in ancient Rome, or like some great and pompous sacrifice to the united divinities of Venus and Bacchus, and of half a dozen other deities, who have names, though I cannot recollect them, in the fasti of Heathen Mythology. I presume the ancients had a God of Gluttony upon their list, and he certainly would have had his altar here, for it is impossible to conceive any article of luxury in the whole science of eating, which is not to be procured. Almost all the commotions which have taken place in Paris, originated, it is said, in the recesses of the Palais Royal: it was in this garden that Fabre D'Eglantine, a title he had chosen to give himself, a young man till then unknown, but who soon acquired a celebrity that was afterwards fatal to him, placing himself upon a chair that he might be the better seen and heard, raised a spirit in the minds of his audience, which vented itself in the destruction of the Bastile. The eloquence of Antony, at the funeral of Caesar, was not more powerful or more destructive: he was a man of abilities, and became very shortly after, a victim of the revolution, which ultimately destroying almost every one, whom it had called into notice, has been well compared to Saturn, who the poets pretended devoured his own children.

A part of the Palace has been appropriated to the Tribunate, who meet in a very pretty room, where they have very little to do, though their powers, as they appear in print, might induce one to suppose that their time would be precious; I was present on one occasion, and could not but ad-

mire the elegance of the hall, which is in the form best adapted to a theatre ; it is nearly half circular ; the president being placed in what might be the centre of a small stage, while the members are ranged on benches, which take the form of the building, and a handsome gallery runs along above, for the reception of strangers ; it is here, as in the other publick assemblies of France, the person who is to speak, mounts into an elevated place below the president, upon whom he turns his back while he addresses his brother tribunes. It seemed to me like a parish clerk going to set a psalm, and one may assert, that any psalm, even of Sternhold and Hopkins' translation, and sung in any manner whatever, would have been better than the tiresome adulatory propositions which were made by different members ; it was on the return of the Emperour from the battle of Austerlitz ; one was for erecting a pillar like that of Trajan, and another for a triumphal arch, under which people were not to pass but on the anniversary of that great victory, and all were running the race of flattery. Continuing along the Rue St. Honoré, we leave the Louvre and the avenue which leads to the Pont Neuf, on the right, and arrive where the street being considerably widened, takes the name of La Fevounerie ; it was here, while the space was occupied by two narrow streets, that Henry IV. was assassinated by Ravallac, who had followed him with that intention, all the way from the Louvre. You will be struck in the memoirs of Sully, with the little secondary causes that led to this catas-

trophe. Henry IV. had certainly many great qualities, but the horrid termination of his life, worked upon by the enthusiasm of the nation, and the comparisons they have since had occasion to make, has contributed not a little to magnify his virtues. The Queen does not appear to have regretted him extremely; and can you very much blame her; would any wife in Carolina or Virginia have lived with such a husband? He was always, as you perceive in Sully, engaged in some love intrigue or other, and even at last, it was doubtful whether the intended march of his army was to humble Philip II. or to bring back a lady whose husband had very naturally removed her from within his power. You will observe upon the plan of Paris, that two streets, going from north to south, and for the whole breadth of the city, cross the direction of the Rue St Honoré in this neighbourhood, nearly at right angles; one of them leads down to the Pont au Change, and the other to that of Notre Dame; if we were to continue our way forward, we should, after turning two corners, be in the Rue de la Verrerie, and reassuming our former course nearly west, would soon be on the ground where the Bastile stood, which is now a timber yard; but let us rather turn north-eastwardly to the Halles, and then find our way as we can to the Temple. I never was in a place where there appeared such a profusion of eatables for sale, as in Paris; there are markets which occupy the whole length of different streets; there are butcher's stalls where sheep are suspended by the half dozen; there are shops where

game of every sort is for sale, and the Halles alone would seem sufficient to the wants of any place on earth—it has more the appearance of a dirty, disorderly encampment, than a market; meat and fruit, and flowers and sea-fish, and vegetables of every sort, seem promiscuously mixed, and are offered for sale by those whom Mr. Burke, alluding to their conduct during the revolution, styles, in his emphatick way, the fiends of hell, in the abused forms of the worst of women. Mr. Burke may say what he will, but some of the likeliest faces I saw, were among the younger females of this order. The streets of Paris are narrow and badly paved, and have no side-ways for foot passengers, owing no doubt to the number of large hotels, which are generally built at the farther extremity of a court, and have no communication with the street, but by a carriage way; they are extremely thronged too, by carriages of various sorts, carts, hackney carriages, gentlemen's coaches and cabriolets; these last are one horse chairs, with tops, they are a very favourite vehicle, and are generally driven very fast—in general, the horses to the private carriages are good, and no coachmen upon earth drive so well, or with so much good humour; I hardly ever remember seeing a coachman or a carter in Geneva or France, beat his horses in that cruel way, which is too often the case in England and America, or ever saw two coachmen quarrel. The Temple, formerly the residence of the Knights Templars, is now a gloomy state-prison; it was here that the royal family of France was confined, after the

tenth of August. The interesting work of Clery will have drawn tears from your eyes, and I hardly think that there is so ferocious a democrat in America, as not to feel for the cruelty and injustice which this fallen family was made to suffer ; one is still at a loss to find a name for the sentiment which impelled those who acted a principal part in this tragedy. It must surely have been fear ; the fear of not being thought a patriot, or the fear of death, could alone have rendered a man so insensible to the feelings of common humanity ; but even that explanation cannot always satisfy our mind. It might be necessary, in the mistaken opinions of many, to put the King to death ; it might be necessary to destroy the Queen, and to confine their children ; but the cruelty practised upon the Dauphin, can come within no description of policy, no supposition of fear, or of any other motive ; it must have arisen from the inspiration of some infernal spirit, permitted to roam at large, for the torment of mankind—the unfortunate child was humbled, by being put to work with a shoemaker, and had been degraded by being taught all the little dirty practices which the ingenuity of the monster who watched over him, could devise, while a member of the Convention thought it necessary to justify himself from a charge of giving him any education—I can punish tyrants, was his expression, and I am not likely to be very attentive how I bring up their children. It was upon a bed that was never made, in the corner of a naked room that was never cleaned, that the descendant of Henry IV. passed the

last year of his existence—figure to yourself now, any child of ten years of age, debarred the natural enjoyments which childhood instinctively requires, deprived even of fresh air, and destitute of all moral and intellectual education—even sleep too, the wretches last resource, was denied him undisturbed, compelled as he was by the rude voice of a sentry to present himself at the grating of his prison door every two hours, during a long winter's night; and figure to yourself too, that this took place in the centre of a city, which calls itself the seat of science and of the arts, any where ten years before, the very name of Henry IV. would have brought tears into the eyes of almost every individual. The treatment experienced by his sister, now Duchesse d'Angoulême, was equally atrocious, and but for the strength of mind, even at that early age, would have been equally fatal. Nothing but the prospect, which was afterwards realized, of making her serve as an exchange for the deputies whom Dumourier had given up to the Austrians, saved her in all probability from a violent end; for in addition to the deadly hate which pursued all the family, it was her fate to displease and mortify Robespierre, when at the summit of power. After months and years of solitary confinement, during which time she was scarcely supplied with decent cloathing, she saw herself suddenly surrounded by female attendants, who compelled her acceptance of every article of dress, and every ornament, that suited her rank, and her time of life, and then conducted her to the apartments of Robespierre, and seated her at table with

him, and there she had to listen to a proposal of marriage from this monster, who had rioted in the blood of her dearest friends. When the government of the Stadtholder was set aside in Holland, it was the care of De Wit to give an excellent education to the Prince of Orange; and on the death of Charles I. of England, we perceive his children sent to their relations abroad. Even Algernon Sydney, whom no man will accuse of having been partial to royalty, exerted himself to save from danger the person of the Prince, who was afterwards Charles II.

The entrance of the Temple is by a large gate into a spacious court, but the porter would not suffer me to take even a transient view of the building. I could not but be diverted while he was uttering his prohibition in rather uncivil terms, to observe the terror of an American citizen, who was with me; he was a Frenchman by birth, and had thought nothing wrong which Frenchmen could do, while he was on the other side of the water; but having indulged himself in some observations on the marriage of the Emperour's brother with an American lady, and having in some little degree appeared as the agent of her friends, the door of his chamber had been burst open at three o'clock in the morning, and he had been conducted with very little ceremony to the Conciergerie; after remaining there two days, and undergoing an examination as to his views in life, his means of subsistence, and the business that had brought him to France, and still kept him there, he was dismissed with the wholesome advice of being more circum-

spect for the future. It is impossible to approach the Temple without thinking of Sir Sydney Smith, whose escape does so much honour to the courage and ingenuity of his friends; you will see a relation of it in Mr. Carr; it is taken from an account which is said to have been given by Sir Sydney himself; but what Mr. Carr has not mentioned, is perhaps no less singular; it was customary with the goaler, who appears to have done his duty faithfully towards his employers, to come to terms with his prisoner, and to accept most cheerfully of his parole, whenever he could be prevailed upon to give it, that he would not during a certain time, avail himself of any opportunity to make his escape; he would then say to him, now Commodore, my doors are open, and I may go to sleep; and would sometimes propose a walk in the Boulevards. Sir Sydney Smith is certainly a very distinguished character, and Bonaparte is too much of a great man himself, not to think so; he sent Sir Sydney after the peace of Amiens, a very handsome pair of pistols; and never, I am told, speaks of his gallant adversary, but in terms of respect.\*

\* It is certainly singular, as Mr. Burke says, that La Fayette who had recommended himself to the English nation by no service, or by any act or even expression of kindness, should have been the subject of a motion in the house of Commons to have him released from prison, and that the gallant Sir Sydney Smith, the faithful, ardent, zealous servant of his King and country, should have remained forgotten, when thrown into prison by the French Government, and treated with a degree of rigour altogether unknown in the usages of modern warfare.



## LETTER LXI.

MY DEAR E——,

ALL that appears externally of the Temple, are three or four gloomy towers, which have succeeded to the Bastile of former times ; and it is in these, and in the subterraneous vaults below, if we are to believe the reports of Paris, that scenes take place, whose lightest word “ would harrow up the soul ;” it was here the gallant Pichegru died, and it was here that captain Wright breathed his last. Whatever may have been the fate of the first, I cannot believe that the latter suffered from the hand of violence ; for I cannot perceive any advantage that could possibly result from it to the person, who alone might order the perpetration of such a deed. It is certain, however, (I have it from such good authority that I may venture to assert it ; ) it is certain, that his nephew and another young man, who were transferred with him to the Temple, when he was taken, were threatened with the torture, to make them confess some circumstance which the government was desirous of being able to prove ; they were resolute, however, in their refusal, and afterwards sent to Verdun. If you stretch a thread from the corner of the Rue Corderie, near the Temple, to the centre of the Place Royale, which is not far from the Bastile, you will pass through the middle of the part of Paris, which is called the Marais ; in Madame de Sevigné’s time, it was fashionable to

reside there, and La Bruyere mentions its being the ton to go to mass in the Marais. It is at present the peaceful retreat of persons of small fortune, or of such as have become moderately rich elsewhere, and wish to pass the rest of their days in tranquil obscurity. There are few or no equipages in the streets, and not many people; and they, as well as the shops, have an air of belonging to a different age, or a different nation, from every thing that one sees in the Rue St. Honorè, or at the Palais Royale. The hours of these quiet people too, are entirely different from those of the other end of the town; they dine at twelve, as their ancestors used to do, and are in bed long before the gayer part of Paris have returned from their evening amusements. If you follow the thread which I have placed in your hands, it will lead you across the Vielle Rue du Temple, not far from the former Convent of St. Gervais, and near the spot where the Duke of Orleans was assassinated, by the orders of that Duke of Burgundy who was afterwards assassinated himself, at Montereau. He was a handsome, gay and good-humoured man, but indiscreet in his avowed admiration of every face that pleased him, and careless in the recital of his love adventures; it was a circumstance of this sort, that drew down upon him the vengeance of the Duke of Burgundy. The same direction will immediately afterwards, carry you to the Rue Culture Saint Catherine, at the corner of which, and the Rue Franc Bourgeois, stands the Hotel de Carnevalet, where Madame de Sevigné resided. It is a large and handsome house, with a

a court-yard in front; it remains precisely as it was in her time, and is let out to a variety of lodgers, who know by tradition, that Madame de Sevigné's apartments were on the first floor in front. We entered the court for a moment, and could not but think of M. de la Rochefoucault and Gourville, and Madame de la Fayette, and the amiable and sprightly Madame de Coulanges, and the little round, facetious, and song making man, her husband, and of the numbers of high rank, of distinguished beauty, of great abilities, and of singular character, who had entered the same gateway, and gone up the same steps before us, and have since been carried down the stream of time. I am too much indebted for amusement, at various moments of my life, to Madame de Sevigné, not to have paid this mark of respect to her memory; I even regret, that I did not visit the ruins of the Castle of Grignan, notwithstanding the outrages that had taken place there. If ever there was a book for all hours, and for all situations, it is Madame de Sevigné's letters. With hardly any greater effort of the mind, than the lazy exercise of smoking would require, we enjoy the conversation of an amiable and well-informed woman; and whether she is sitting by the fire with the Chevalier, and talking of their common interests and of the ways of Providence, or at a supper at Gourville's,\* or in conver-

\* Gourville deserves to be better known to you. He affords the only instance in those times of one raised from the station of a servant to such a degree of respectability in society, as enabled him to live in the best company, and on a footing of the most perfect equality.

sation with Louis XIV. after the play at St. Cyr, or going to visit a sick friend, or going to prayers, or on a journey, we feel ourselves by her side, and make one of the company. There are few people, there are none perhaps, so situated, as not to benefit by her advice on a variety of important subjects. And there are few opinions decidedly useful for the regulation of ordinary life, which she has not recommended, and in a very impressive style. It may seem singular, but I hardly ever met with a Frenchman or even a Genevan, who was acquainted with these letters, in any other way, than as a book which had been put into his hands when young, from its affording a good model for

ty: it is singular too, that having seen himself executed in effigy for bearing arms against Louis XIV. he should have become upon some occasion a sort of favourite, and have been admitted, having no rank, or title, or any claim to distinction but his personal merit, one of the King's party at cards at Versailles. In early life he was distinguished for his courage, his fidelity, and the inexhaustible resources of his mind in times of extreme difficulty: in his latter years it was his knowledge of business, and of accounts, his friendly disposition, his incorruptible integrity, his command of money, his readiness to play at cards or dice, and his always playing handsomely, and his keeping the best table in Paris, that endeared him to his acquaintance.

The great Prince of Condé used to say that the battle of Rocroi itself had not given him so much satisfaction as the having been enabled by Gourville's good management of his affairs, to walk to his carriage without being solicited by creditors, who had been waiting for him in the antichamber.

Madame de Coulanges, who had seen these memoirs in manuscript, thought very highly of them, but did not imagine they would ever be published. Gourville y parle de sa naissance, is her expression, avec une sincérité parfaite, et son neveu n'est pas un assez grand homme pour soutenir une chose aussi estimable à mon gré.

letter-writing. There are other books far more important to the government of life, which never acquire their proper weight in our estimation, and from this very circumstance, perhaps, of their having been, in some measure, made school-books.

I might now conduct you to the Place Royale, where all is solitude and silence, and to the place where the Bastile stood, or to the Arsenal,\* where an assemblage of gloomy buildings, and some remains of ancient fortifications are rendered interesting by the name of Sully, or we might visit the great looking-glass manufactory in the Fauxbourg St. Antoine ; but I must refer you for an idea of these, to some printed account, and conduct you to the Quinze Vingt, which is in this quarter of Paris ; it was originally a hospital for the reception of 300 blind people, and liable, as all hospitals are, to very great abuses, to such as you will see alluded to in Montesquieu's Persian Letters, but is now appropriated to a master and assistants, who have the care and instruction of blind people, who are here taught several useful arts, and soon cease to be a burthen to society. That they should make

\* The celebrated Madame de Genlis had apartments in the Arsenal, I was informed, and frequently resided there. I know nothing more at variance than the stories related of this lady, in private life, and the morals inculcated in her works. Even these, however, in the midst of that homage which they pay to virtue, contain descriptions and allusions, but ill suited to the professed object of the author—arising no doubt from the licentious manners of the court of Orleans, in which she had passed a great part of her life, and by which she was unconsciously affected ; as the splendour of Satan, when on the verge of Paradise, was dimmed and obscured, says Milton, by his late residence in hell.

purses and sticks, and different toys for children, did not surprise me, and I was prepared to find among them some good musicians, and others who were well grounded in the principles of moral and natural philosophy, and in all the usual branches of education. Providence, which has not thought proper that the organs of our senses should be reproduced in case of accident, as happens to some of the reptile and insect race, has bestowed a capability of improvement, that enables the senses which remain, to supply, in great measure, the loss of those we may be deprived of; the ears, and even the sense of smelling, acquire in cases of blindness, a degree of increased sensibility, but it is the touch which appears most wonderfully improved; it becomes so delicately sensible of every modification of form, that the blind may be said to see by their fingers; geography is taught by maps in relief; and I saw a little girl of twelve years of age, do a sum in the Rule of Three, with the utmost accuracy; it was proposed by one of the audience, and contained some fractions; the figures she made use of were at the extremity of pieces of metal, larger and longer than printers' types; these she selected from a heap before her, as they were proper for stating the question, and then added others in the same manner, confining them in a moveable frame, as she proceeded, and feeling their extremities from time to time, with the action of a person who plays upon a piano-forte. In one corner of the room was a printing-press, and a compositor and workmen busily employed, nor

would it have been possible to have judged, either from their manner of working, or their work, that they were blind. They have also a mode of printing, peculiarly adapted to the use of the institution ; the characters being deeply impressed on the surface of the paper, appear in projection on the other side, and the blind musician who wishes to study an air, or any one of them who is desirous of consoling himself with some treatise of devotion, or has, perhaps, received a letter from a friend, for the same mode is applied to writing, turns over the paper, and reads from right to left with his fingers. But if sight can almost be dispensed with in the usual course of ordinary life, if a person may become as good a scholar, and as good a mechanick, without sight as with, it must yet be confessed, to the disadvantage of the *Quinze Vingt*, that the loss of the organ itself is a sad defect to the human face. I never, I thought at the time, had seen so many ugly and ill-looking people brought together before. Their manner of carrying their heads is ungraceful, it is merely adapted to the sense of hearing, and their is something extremely awkward in the walk of a person, who goes groping his way, or runs up against every door-post. The conductors of this institution deserve a great deal of credit, nor should the Emperour be without his share of praise ; he allows a yearly sum and the use of the buildings, and seems really desirous of promoting the prosperity of the establishment. You must now stretch your thread, from the centre of the *Place Royale*, to the northern corner of the *Place de Greve*, and

again thence to the northern extremity of the Palace of the Tuileries. The first course will carry you across the Rue de la Tesseranderie. It was in the second story of a house about midway of this street that Madame de Maintenon lived with her first husband, Scarron, whose gaiety and good humour were proof against the most trying calamities. Scarron is an author not sufficiently known perhaps. When he means to be burlesque, he is ridiculous to excess, but his comical Romance contains some interesting and many laughable scenes, and led the way to that humour, those well described incidents of village manners, those scenes of midnight confusion, and of fighting in country taverns, for which Fielding and Smollet have been since so conspicuous. From being the wife of Scarron, to whose table the guests brought each a dish when they were invited to supper, from soliciting a pension of 25*l.* a year, and being glad to get a bed at the house of Ninon de l'Enclos, to residing in the Royal apartments of Versailles, as wife of Louis XIV. the change was greater than any thing known of in France before the revolution. But Madame de Maintenon's letters convince us that this wonderful transition by no means contributed to her happiness; and such also would probably be the result, if we could know the secret history of the Tuileries, and of St. Cloud. The principal ornament of the Place de Greve, is the Maison de Ville, or Town-House; it is a large and heavy building, in a style of ancient architecture, and such in every respect, as would attract but



little attention, were it not for the interesting events which the view of it is attended with the recollection of. It was from the balcony of the Maison de Ville, that the King heard what seemed the joyful and affectionate shouts of the people, for the last time in his life ; it was here that Mr. Necker showed himself, after his second return from exile, when he made so humane a use of his influence ; and it was in the porch below, that the heroines of the Fronde were placed, dressed out for the occasion to the greatest advantage, with their ladies in attendance, and their knights and gentlemen, amid trumpets, violins, and warlike instruments, and the shouts of the populace, when a convoy of provisions, originally intended for the royal army, but which had been intercepted, passed in a sort of triumph across the Greve. The first executions which gave the mob of Paris a taste for blood, took place at the corner of a neighbouring street, and it was at the Maison de Ville, that the party of Robespierre made their last stand in 1794. He had been rescued by some of his adherents, and carried there as to the strong hold of the Commune, which had for some time exercised a species of sovereignty in Paris, and consequently, over the whole republick. I have been told by a person who was in the crowd when the committee from the convention passed through, that it was by no means decided what was to be the cry, whether for or against the Convention or the Commune, till one of the gens d'armes, who had followed the committee without any particular orders, levelled a pistol at

Robespierre as he entered the hall, and shot the tyrant in the face. It is easier to describe the person of Robespierre\* from the accounts which have been transmitted of him, than to conceive what his motives could have been for so much cruelty and injustice. He was small, not ill made, pale, with a face expressive of talents, blended with malignity, and was always neatly dressed and powdered. One great source of his popularity originally, and the foundation of his power afterwards, was an idea very generally prevalent, that he was of incorruptible integrity in money-matters; it appears, however, that without any salary or any known resources, he sometimes gave expensive entertainments, and that he had lodged a sum of money in a foreign country; he must have been ever internally miserable, for hatred and envy were the ruling passions of his soul, he knew himself to be execrated, and sometimes received anonymous letters, which must have struck him with horror. I know nothing so frightfully eloquent as one or two of them which were found among his papers, and published after his death.† The Greve had served

\* We shall one time or other have a life of this singular being, who know not how to keep himself in power, but by destroying those, whom he had occasion to suspect of being in any degree animated by the same views. I have seen a letter of a younger sister of his, who complains bitterly of his unkindness, but he had a brother, who was tenderly, and even heroically attached to him. It is singular, that the first thing he ever published, was in favour of lenity in the execution of the Criminal law. Calvin's first production was to recommend religious toleration. No two men surely ever deviated more widely from the principles they set out with.

† See recueil de papiers trouvés chez Robespierre apres sa morte. Par Courtois. Published by Order of the Convention.

for centuries, as a place of execution, when the Convention, in order to render the insult over royalty still greater, applied the square between the Champs Elisè and the Tuileries to that purpose; it has since, however, been restored to its former privilege of affording a place for the scaffold of every poor wretch that dies by the sentence of the law. The spot generally chosen for that purpose, from time immemorial, is in the south-eastern corner of the square; a spot fatal to La Brinvilliers, Desrues, and other outcasts of mankind, and to some also who deserved a better fate. It was here that Georges was executed, with eight or ten of his friends and associates. The man who ventures secretly within the boundaries of an established government, with a view to blow the flame of civil war, must be content to forfeit his life, if he is detected; but there are circumstances in some instances, which alleviate the odium of such an enterprise, and Georges ought not to be confounded with a lurking assassin, whose only object is murder. You will find in Smollet and in Macpherson's history of England, the account of a similar enterprise in the reign of King William, undertaken by a number of ill-advised but gallant gentlemen, in favour of the exiled family; and it is thought that the Duke D'Enghien, whose death has been so universally lamented, even in France, had once ventured into Paris, as the Duke of Berwick tells us in his memoirs, that he did upon a certain occasion, into London. Had this unfortunate Prince been discovered at the time, and had there been even the

formality of justice, the world might still have pitied him, but they must in great measure have exculpated the government, whose severity would have appeared an act of legal self-defence; but from the manner in which this shocking affair was planned and executed, it deserves to be branded with the censure of all mankind. It was a violent outrage, ending in an act of deliberate murder. Some sense of so foul a deed will adhere, it is to be hoped, to the conscience of him who ordered it, all hardened as he is; fortune may not smile upon him always, and in some moment of uncertainty and anxiety, he may have dreams not unlike those of Richard, on Bosworth field, and tell his affrighted attendants some morning, in an agony of distress, of the phantoms he had seen, and of the shadow like an angel, with bright hair, dabbled in blood.

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## LETTER LXII.

MY DEAR E——,

IN the parts of Paris we are now speaking of, the streets are narrow and dirty, and crowded with carts and carriages, and persons on foot, who all seem intent on some business or other. The houses are nearly of one appearance, and there are now and then small shops and stalls, with broken victuals for sale, and of sorts which suppose very humble appetites and very great poverty, in those

who can be purchasers of them. Beggars are to be met in every part of the city ; some of them keep changing to and from different parts of a street, while others have their stations, which they take as regularly as a sentinel mounts guard ; stories are told of their meetings of an evening, and of their carousals, but I generally considered such relations as evasions by which an uncharitable disposition conceals itself. How these beggars really subsist is a mystery, for whatever private charity there may be, there is no place on earth where charity shows itself less in publick, or where the government is less solicitous about the maintenance of the poor. There are many other distressing objects in the streets who are seen raking in obscure corners for rags and scraps of paper, and bones and pieces of broken glass, which they sell by weight at certain manufactories ; they are generally women and frequently advanced in life ; I have seen such a one put a piece of bread into her mouth which she had uncovered in the collected sweepings of the street, and receive a few sous which were put into her hand, with all the gratitude of a mind that felt the merciful interference of Providence to protect her from starving. Our present course will conduct us, if you follow the thread, to the head of the Rue de la Monnoie, which leads up from the Pont Neuf, where the Rue Betizi enters it at right angles ; it was in this street, and two doors from the north corner, where it joins the Rue de la Monnoie, that Admiral Coligny resided at the time of the St. Barthelemy. To judge from what the present inhabi-

tants assert, and indeed from the appearance of the house, not the least alteration has taken place there. I entered the court yard, and stood under what had been the admiral's chamber window, and probably on the spot on which this gallant gentleman once lay extended. He was a man of exalted merit, a stranger in a very corrupt age to every base and selfish motive, and having embraced the protestant religion, which others made a pretext of, from reflection and conviction, he was determined to adhere to it at every risk; in times of peace his mind was fertile in expedients for the good of the people, nor was he less distinguished in war. Above all the commanders of his time he could rise terrible to his enemies after a defeat; he knew how to preserve an army unbroken, though defeated, and could infuse his own unconquerable courage into the breasts of others. It is melancholy that the genius and spirit of this distinguished character should have found their principal employment in the horrors of a civil war, and that the remains of such a hero should have been treated with indignity by the Duke of Guise, who was himself one of the most distinguished characters of the age he lived in; men like those two, with about half a dozen of their friends and followers united, might have fixed the prosperity of their country upon a basis not easily to be shaken. The president, Henault, whom I have made great use of in all I have said to you about France, observes, that we are apt to complain of the dearth of great men, and to regret those times when a number of illustrious names were

conspicuous at the same period ; great and important events prepared with genius, promoted by all the arts of human ingenuity, and executed with courage, are sure to attract our attention most powerfully ; but it frequently happens that the people are far from being rendered happier by a circumstance so agreeable to our imagination. When several individuals, men of high abilities and of great power lay claim at the same time to an equal share in the administration of the government, they generally begin by weakening, and end by subverting, the supreme authority. The Duke of Guise supported by his four aspiring brothers, all equally valiant with himself, and possessing the greatest influence by means of their splendid connexions, bore down every thing before him. The manners of the age were extremely unfavourable to every degree of good order in government, and of decorum in private life, and some idea may be formed of the universal licentiousness by an anecdote which is related of the Duke of Guise. Having learned that the conduct of his dutchess, which had been always irregular, had of late attracted the attention of the publick in an unusual degree, he took occasion to observe, that he should consider any man as his enemy, who under any pretence, or from any motive, should communicate to him any thing to her disadvantage. Determining however to derive amusement from what would be a source of affliction to the greater part of mankind, he appeared one morning by the Dutchess's bedside with a potion, which he informed her was a mortal poison,

and which he compelled her to take. As the prospect of death very naturally excites repentance, the Dutchess bewailed her sins, and told with tears of contrition of all the errours of her life, blending with it of course a great deal of the secret history of others. She shortly after fell into a deep sleep of several hours, and was at length awakened by the noise of a brilliant company around her bed, who with the Duke at their head were laughing at her credulity. There are many other curious and interesting anecdotes related of those times, to be found only in books which are very little read, that might amuse you ; but I have already too often wandered from my purpose, and must conduct you down the Rue de la Monnoie to the extremity of the Pont Neuf, where the torrent of human life seems rolling along without intermission. Hundreds are to be seen here moving in all directions, and amid a constant noise of carriages ; there are pedlars offering sometimes a variety of little articles at the same price for each, and hawkers holding out the last bulletin for sale, or reading it to a large circle, and sellers of oranges, and of ready made clothes, and of articles to eat, all hot from the frying-pan, and of old books, or of pieces of carpeting, or of prints, strung upon a twine, and there are signs very neatly painted, in which you are told that the citizen such a one is ready to run of a message for you, and that he or his wife will shear a lap-dog, or crop his ears, or cure him of the mange ; and to make up the group, there are beggars at their stands, and the keepers of moveable gaming-tables,



and musicians, conjurers, and mountebanks selling physick, and lemonadiers, and fortune-tellers. The lemonadier is a man very neatly and rather fantastically dressed, who has a large urn upon his back, from which he offers liquorice and water, and sometimes lemonade, to all that pass. Some of these highway musicians perform upon a variety of instruments at the same time, but I could not perceive that they made any thing. As the celebrated Elviou of the Feydeau Theatre was passing here once with his wife, they were struck with the distress of a poor musician who was doing his best to attract attention upon an ordinary piano forte, which he accompanied with his voice, and determined both of them to indulge the frolick of doing a good action. Elviou sat down to the piano and played and sung some favourite airs, the lady held a hat out, and half a dozen louis were soon collected for one who perhaps hardly in his life before had ever seen so much money. It must have been some anecdote of this sort that gave rise to what we are told by the poets, of the powers of the celebrated Amphion, who was able by the sounds of his harp to move stocks and stones at the building of Thebes. I have been more than once amused in the midst of all this uproar without confusion, to perceive the grave and silent demeanour of the soldier upon guard, who sometimes interferes with a monosyllable as he walks backwards and forwards upon the pavement, but who is generally as calm and as serene as the angel in Addison's famous simile; by the way I cannot help thinking my application of

this figure a better one than the poet's, the hero of the campaign was certainly a very great man, but with all his genius for war, his courage and experience, he is said never to have heard the whistling of a cannon ball without dodging. I have walked frequently for half an hour together in the neighbourhood of the Pont Neuf, and have always observed that the fortune-tellers seemed most attended to. Their usual mode of proceeding is by a pack of cards, which they shuffle, and then gravely examine, revealing as they happen to be paid, no doubt, and from a glimpse of the truth which they are expert in catching, the future intentions and dispensation of Providence. I have seen some well-looking young women listening with attention to these seers, and heard one of them tell a young man, in whose countenance there was a great deal of anxiety expressed, the nine of hearts shows me that you have been extremely agitated of late, but I see by the ace of spades that you are about to take a little journey, which will set all to rights again. It is said by those who know Paris, that there are at least fifty fortune-tellers upon the Boulevards between the Vieille rue du Temple and the rue St. Honoré; some have tables before them covered with hieroglyphics and magical figures, and frequently a wheel with different compartments; the person who consults, having mentioned his question, accepts a piece of paper to appearance blank, and places it in a compartment of the wheel, a whirl is then given to the wheel, and the slip of paper is drawn out with a sentence written

on it, which the consultor applies as he can to his own circumstances, and the object of his curiosity. A little chemical knowledge and some acquaintance with mankind enables the fortune teller to have by him a great variety of what may serve as answers, written with a composition which requires the addition of a certain powder to render the characters that are formed by it legible; and this powder is, as you may suppose, communicated in the wheel. Robberies were formerly committed at night on the Pont Neuf, and there was a time when a passenger who crossed the Pont de Change after dark was in danger of being thrown into the river; but the police first set on foot by Louis XIV. and since so materially improved, has long ago put an end to such acts of violence. It protects the meanest as well as the greatest individual, he is safe from every thing but the government, but their inferior agents are sometimes capricious as well as their great master, and know how to convert an idle and accidental expression, or a ludicrous epigram, into an outrage upon the dignity of the sovereign. In those cases the publick know nothing about the mode of proceeding, or degree of punishment, which is frequently extended to banishment, sometimes to a remote part of France, and at others to Cayenne, and in certain cases even to death itself. The individual disappears, and is no more spoken of. In proceeding along the Quai as you must now suppose yourself, you have the gallery of the Louvre, and afterwards that of the Tuileries on the right, and the river on the left. On the op-

posite side, at the corner of the rue de Beaune and the Quai Voltaire, stands the house once the Marquis de Villette's, and where Voltaire resided on his last visit to Paris; it was there, and at the theatre, that he enjoyed more of that adoration which is sometimes paid to the illustrious dead, than was ever paid to any man living. He had chosen his apartment in an upper story, and Monsieur de Villette to save him the fatigue of the ascent, had contrived a chair to be raised by a pulley, which conveyed him to it at pleasure, while the adjoining room, which served him as a parlour, was decorated and furnished in imitation of a flower-garden. I am convinced, that the return to Paris after so long an exile of this great patriarch of literature, this apostle of infidelity, who had grown old in the habit of treating all things, even the most sacred, with light and dangerous irreverence, was a fatal oversight in the government. Banished to an obscure corner of France, he had carried on his machinations against religion and morality with impunity; and the triumph of his party, which knew no bounds, and the universal applause, which seemed as much lavished upon the infidel, as upon the poet, contributed extremely to that violent fermentation which ended in the revolution. One of his favourites was Condorcet, who, with all the distinction that wit and science could give him, was yet desirous but a year or two before the revolution, of being thought a Marquis, and of being one of the teachers of the dauphin. He is the same Condorcet whose speeches against the pri-

vileged orders and against that very dauphin were afterwards so bitter ; but his end was such as must still excite compassion. At the fall of the Girondist party he had been able to conceal himself for six months in Paris, but fearful at length of being discovered, and perhaps tired of confinement, he left the city, but was not able to pass the guards, who were posted a little beyond the suburbs, and yet afraid to return. Thus situated, he wandered about the adjoining fields, till absolute want of nourishment drove him to enter a publick house, where he was immediately suspected, seized, and sent to prison, and as the magistrates who committed him, were mechanicks, new to their office, and who had other cares, he was forgotten in the dungeon for twice four and twenty hours, and died of hunger. The houses immediately preceding that, once Monsieur de Villette's, are principally the shops of booksellers, but they are much less frequented than formerly, for people never read so little, I am told, as they do at present. The whole Quai takes its name from Voltaire, it was formerly the Quai Mulagnet. It was somewhere in this neighbourhood that I first saw a stereotype printing-office ; this mode of printing is costly in the first instance, but in the case of books which are likely to command a permanent sale, it is by far the cheapest in the end ; the process is simple and very easily explained ; a leaf having been printed in the usual way, it is carefully examined, and every fault corrected in the arrangement of the letters from which it was struck off ; and these letters thus arranged

are then made use of for forming a cast of the whole page ; and the pages of a book may be afterwards printed so as to form any number of editions at a very small expense of manual labour. I was glad to see Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield* among the stereotype editions, and I was told that there are several other English books ; for one solitary vestige of republicanism in France is a fondness for the language spoken by the English and Americans. I have mentioned something in a former letter of the continued improvements and embellishments which are going on in Paris, and nowhere does the good sense which directs them appear more conspicuously than along the united galleries of the Louvre and the Tuileries, which have been pierced in a variety of places, so as to open a communication for carriages with the rue St. Honorè and the environs of the Palais Royale. The Emperour, indeed, seems desirous of conciliating the affections, as well as of commanding the admiration of his good people of Paris ; he pays them the sort of compliment which Alexander did the Athenians ; his efforts are all however, I believe, to no purpose. I have mixed with the people upon great occasions, when their partiality in his favour, if it had existed, must certainly have shown itself, and I saw nothing of it ; they admire his good fortune, and think highly of his talents, but they have not even the affectation of attachment to his person ; this is contrary to what usually characterizes the Parisians, and may, among other causes, be attributed to the number of poor and obscure

individuals whom he has raised to be princes and rich men over them, and who insult the publick misery by their luxury and ostentation. But we will return to this subject hereafter, and continue our walk homewards through the Tuileries. If the accounts which I have seen of these gardens before the revolution be true, the Parisians who are so devoted to walking, are under obligations to the present government; they are kept in perfect order, and not the smallest indecorum is permitted. It was here, and in the midst of the convention, assembled at a respectful distance round his person, that Robespierre solemnized the festival he had proposed in honour of the Supreme Being. An immense multitude had crowded the gardens, and the hope was, that a new order of things would take place, and the cruel operation of the guillotine be suspended; but the tyrant who might upon these terms, and with a victorious army at his orders, have established himself in power for life perhaps, was impelled by his sanguinary temper to disclose further views of destruction, nor did he sufficiently conceal upon this, as he had done upon former occasions, the extent of his ambition; he acted as high priest in the ridiculous ceremony, and suffered a considerable space to intervene as he walked in the procession between himself and the rest of the convention. There are always chairs to be hired in the gardens, with the news-papers of the day, and I have often rested myself in this manner after a walk of several miles through very obscure places, which seemed as remote from the splendour of the

surrounding scene at the Tuileries, as the grossness of the middle ages was from the refinement of the present day. A French newspaper is in general less worth reading than you can possibly imagine. The criticisms it contains are influenced by the only species of party spirit which dares show itself. The accounts of publick events are such as the agent of the police approves, and when the editor is left a little more to himself, as in speaking of America for instance, his information is very far from correct. His ignorance of our laws and manners, and his misconception of our publick proceedings, lead him into the most ridiculous mistakes. The report of a committee, for instance, is frequently given as a law, and a motion in congress for regulating and putting an end to the slave-trade, is represented to the world as a bill for the emancipation of negroes. That the editor of a newspaper who is so circumscribed in point of time, and obliged frequently to employ very ignorant people, should be led into such mistakes and misrepresentations, does not surprise me; but I am astonished that a man of Volney's literary celebrity should have known us so little, or should have had so little respect for himself, as to lend his name to the foolish and scandalous observations which disgrace his otherwise accurate account of the United States. We are, according to him, a lazy, avaricious, corrupt, rude, ignorant, and tea-drinking set of barbarians.\* Our meals,

\* A Journalist of some reputation expresses his surprise in a review of Volney's book, that Congress had not employed French bakers to travel into the different States, in order to instruct the Americans in the art of making bread.



which are confined to one or two coarse ingredients, are rendered still more unwholesome by bad cookery. Our attachment to the laws and constitution of our country, in all those, at least, who are called federalists, is mere pretence, the secret object in view is to re-establish the British empire in America, or some monarchy of our own, and if we are preserved from such evils, it can only be (God help us) by the friendship of France, and the virtues of Mr. Jefferson. From having scarcely any newspapers, the French nation passed suddenly at one period of the revolution to the opposite extreme, and had too many. Every leader of a party either conducted a paper or had one in his pay, and the tyrant of the day, whatever his measures might be, was sure of seeing them applauded every morning in twenty or thirty different papers, which were sent all over the republic. It was by these means that the publick credulity and good faith were abused and imposed upon; that which should have been the food of the human understanding, was converted into poison, and one of the best of God's good gifts most villainously abused. A file of the *Moniteurs* might afford an interesting chapter in the history of the human mind. It would exhibit the same people, and with very short intervening intervals, in very different points of view; holding out one day the expressions of a grateful nation to the Supreme Being for the safety of Robespierre, and committing him the next to the execration of future ages, as the greatest, bloodiest, and meanest of all tyrants. Of the effect of these daily pro-

ductions upon the language and literature of France we will speak hereafter ; they were very much restrained under the directory, and the subsequent change of government has entirely restored them to their former insipidity. They are now tameness itself in all political discussions, except where their exertions are animated by a sentiment of hatred against Russia or Sweden, and particularly against England, which is the great obstacle to every project of ambition, and consequently the great mark for the arrows of invective. This is a miserable sort of warfare, and fit only for a set of hirelings. But the Emperour himself disdains not, in imitation of his great predecessor Commodus, to put on occasionally the armour of a common gladiator, and to descend into the arena. He either dictates or contributes to whatever is most bitter and malignant in the *Moniteur* ; and were he not known by that circumstance, he might yet be easily distinguished by his style, for singular as it may appear, though he speaks it pretty well, he has never learnt to write correctly the language of the people among whom he was brought up, and over whom he reigns, nor does any one dare to tell him if he commits a fault, which he has done more than once, and on very serious occasions.

## LETTER LXIII.

MY DEAR E——,

IF I could conduct you homewards with me from the Tuileries to the Rue de la Ferne des Mathurins, you would find us comfortably lodged in as much retirement from the noise and bustle of the city, as if we were in a country town of New-England. Our house is small, but convenient ; and with the kitchen and the porter's lodge, and the porte cochere, and the Court-yard, has the appearance of a Hotel in miniature. The office of porter, at a publick hotel, is generally filled by some inferior tradesman, who can by pulling a string, raise the bolt without moving from his seat, or his shop-board ; but in private houses he is a servant so stationed as to attend the gate, and whose business it is to sweep out the rooms and staircase, and to rub the floors every morning ; they are so frequently from Switzerland, that the words Porter and Swiss, are become synonymous ; ours, however, is a Savoyard, who having wandered at a very early age from his native mountains, and swept chimnies, and cleaned shoes, and gone of errands, and practised all the various modes of living, which his nation seems in possession of in Paris, is now settled down for life as a porter, contented to get his victuals, and about twelve pounds a year. Our coachman is a man advanced in life, with a very grave countenance, and a head nicely powdered. He would

not upon any account mount the coachbox of a morning, before two enormous curls, which he wears at the sides, were completely arranged, and he declared to me upon his veracity, that this article of his toilette cost him full sixty sous a quarter. Our cook also must be introduced to your acquaintance; not Dame Leonarda of immortal memory, nor Dame Jacintha whose ragouts were so perfect, understood the business of the kitchen better, but she has other talents which would have qualified her for a distinguished place in the kitchen of the Sicilian Nobleman, and we find ourselves obliged to overlook her accounts very regularly every day. We have a valet de place also, who has all the merit those sort of people ever have; he has his favourites among the tradesmen, and levies, I presume, a small contribution at our expense. A water carrier keeps the house well supplied with water, and since the invention of filtering fountains, the Seine water is as good as that of your best springs at the mountains. A part of Paris is supplied with this necessary of life by the powers of the steam engine of Chailot, the practicability of which was a cause of discussion for the wits of Paris, for Mirabeau and Beaumarchais among the rest, till their attention was called off to objects which have not been productive of such general utility. There is a great deal yet to be described on the North side of the river; all the places of publick amusement are there, and of these I must give you some account; but we will first make an excursion to the other side, at the South

Eastern extremity of the city. Let me request you therefore to return to your plan of Paris, and to draw a line, or stretch a thread, from the Southern extremity of the Tuilleries, to the Luxembourg, which you will easily find; a continuation of the line will strike the Rue St. Jaques, at the English Benedictines; another, at an obtuse angle, will carry you to the Gobelin manufactory, hence the Rue St. Marcel will conduct you to the ancient and now obscure church of St. Medard, and you will afterwards pass along the Rue Neuve d'Orleans, to the Garden of Plants. From the Garden of Plants we will return homewards by the Rue St. Victor, and the place Maubert, and across the island of the city, where the ancient palace of Justice, on the one side, and the Metropolitan church of Notre Dame, on the other, will deserve our attention as we pass. Having crossed to the Quai Voltaire, the line soon brings you to the Rue des Petits Augustins, and shortly after to the ancient abbey of that name. This street, des Petits Augustins, was formerly a canal, that divided the Scholar's meadow, where Sully describes himself as having exposed his life in so careless a manner, after the death of Madame de Rosny; at the upper end of it stands the former convent of Augustin monks, where all the monuments and other pieces of ornamental sculpture, which could be saved from the ruin of the churches during the madness of the revolution, have been deposited; these curious relics of ancient art, and memorials of distinguished persons, are here arranged in different apartments,

according to their respective antiquity, and one has the satisfaction to trace the progress of sculpture through the course of many succeeding centuries. When the tombs at St. Dennis were opened, the pretence was to make use of the leaden coffins, which had been accumulated there in so many ages, for the purpose of war, but the chief object of the wretches who then governed, was to lower the Regal Character in the estimation of the nation by this last insult. Fortunately, with all their desire to destroy, the greater part of the monuments were preserved, and are now here ; the intrinsick merit of the sculpture, in those pieces which were meant to represent the earlier kings, is very small indeed. Clovis, Chilperic, and Clotaire, are so many blocks of mishapen stone, in which there is at best but a rude imitation of the human figure ; it was this last, who, as he felt himself dying, was heard to exclaim, “ And who is this mighty God of Heaven, that can at his pleasure, remove the greatest monarch upon earth ? ” For so this barbarian supposed himself. The statue of St. Louis, however, is somewhat better ; it is formed, indeed, like the others, of very ordinary stone, and the features are considerably defaced, but in this rude representation, and after a lapse of six centuries, there is an air of goodness and simplicity, and more of countenance, than I could ever discover in many of the master-pieces of Grecian art. The leaden saint upon his hat, and the air of cunning and malignity, are expressive of Louis XI. ; the guards of this wretched tyrant watching day and night over his person, and the

walls of his castle covered with iron spikes, and his looking about so anxiously in his last moments for some earthly mediator between heaven and himself, would prevent any succeeding monarch, we might suppose, from giving way to those suspicions, and to that implacable resentment, which rendered the latter part of the reign of Louis so fatal to his subjects ; but man will not be benefited by the experience of others. The face of Louis XII. is that of an emaciated old man, but I considered it with great attention and respect ; it was he who said, upon being told that the Parisians ridiculed his mode of living, I had rather they should laugh at my parsimony and simplicity, than be made to weep by my oppression and tyranny. The historian of his life says, he might have lived many years longer, had he not in order to please his young wife, the beautiful Mary of England, so materially altered his mode of living. He had always been accustomed to dine at eight ; but he now dined at noon, and instead of going to bed at the good old hour of six, he would frequently sit up till near midnight. It would lead us frequently into error, I know, to apply the system of Lavater upon every occasion, but Richelieu, though supported by Religion, and with Science weeping at his feet, and in the attitude of a dying man, discovers a proud and domineering spirit in his countenance, while there is something yielding and compliant in the air and attitude of his successor Mazarin. You will see in Voltaire's Louis XIV. what immense sums of money this last left behind him ; one of his modes of

amassing, was to buy up the engagements of the government, which he knew how to depress the price of, and to pay himself the full nominal value from the Royal Treasury. Another of the distinguished ministers of France, whose statue is seen here at full length, is Louvois, in whose countenance, and in the swelling of whose upper lip, there is a great deal of character expressed. I accompanied the administrator of the museum, as he is called, up stairs, and he there showed me in a closet the bust of Louis XV.; who appears to have been one of the handsomest men of his time, with those of the late king, and of the unfortunate Maria Antoinette, in whose air there is a great deal of energy and animation. She appears, as she really was, every way superiour to Madame de Barry,\* whose bust is in the same closet; this last was a handsome woman, but her beauty has an insipidity of expression, only fitted for the Haram. There is a garden

\* This person, who in the earlier part of her life had been known by the name of Mademoiselle Lange, a name which seemed due to her beauty, was born in the lowest ranks of society, and brought up in habits of great depravity. She was afterwards elevated by a marriage with a Count de Barri, who lent his name upon the occasion, for it was never intended they should live together, and became the favourite of Louis XV. over whom she acquired the most unlimited influence. She was without ambition, and without any of that affectation of political knowledge, which distinguished her predecessor Madame de Pompadour, but her good nature, her ignorance, and her extreme indifference to consequences, rendered her a dangerous instrument in the hands of those who surrounded her. Having incautiously ventured within the grasp of Robespierre after a visit to England, she perished at the Guillotine; manifesting, it is said, by her behaviour at that awful moment, that she had neither Pride nor Religion.



annexed to the Museum, which contains among other tombs, that of Abelard and Eloïsa, which was brought from Paraclete, but the bones of these unhappy lovers are in a box above stairs, with a partition between them, such as became the piety of a prior, and the sanctity of a holy abbess. This decent attention to the poor remains of two persons, who lived so many years ago, and whose lives were of so little importance to society, is one of the most splendid triumphs of English Poetry. There is something extremely solemn in this assemblage of kings, statesmen, and soldiers; of great ladies disguised once either for their beauty, or their high birth, and of magistrates, and men of letters; it seems an emblem of a future state, in which all ranks and generations will lie confounded. The near neighbourhood of some of these—of Piron and Voltaire, for instance, reminded me of that passage in Pope's Windsor Castle, where he describes one common tomb as receiving those whom the same country could not formerly contain:

“ And by his side the much fear'd Edward sleeps.”\*

It is at the same time highly gratifying to trace the progress of sculpture through so many centuries, and to observe the changes which have taken place in dress. The stiff stays, and long waists of former days, are still more frightful, I think, in stone, than in colours. The art of sculpture took its rise among the fine forms, and in the fine climate

\* L'oppressé, l'opprimé n'ont plus qu'un même asile.—LA HARPE.

of ancient Greece ; thence it passed to their conquerors the Romans ; but the removal of the seat of government, together with every eminent artist, and every valuable production of former times under Constantine, and the inroads of barbarians afterwards, put an end to the art in Rome, while the zeal of the image-breaking kings, and the prevalence of the Mahometan religion were fatal to it in the East. It is said to have been revived in France under St. Louis, and to have attained its utmost perfection there, before the time of Louis XIV. when the simplicity and elegance of antiquity were neglected, for imaginary taste and false dignity. What effect the revolution may have had upon this, and upon the sister art of painting, does not seem yet decided. There have been some eminent painters, and among the rest David has been much spoken of, but I think the figures of his pictures exaggerated, and the colouring false ; every object of them seemed tinged with yellow ; as to sculpture, the art is too expensive to be successfully patronized by a government, which, with a most splendid court, an immense army, a number of needy dependants to provide for, and a fleet to create, is extremely limited in its pecuniary resources, and borrows no money, but by anticipating on the next year's revenue, and at the rate of nine per cent. A figure as large as life costs nearly 600*l*. Such at least was the information given me by one of the most eminent sculptors, whom I found living at the ancient Sorbonne. He informed me at the same time, that having contracted for a statue with the

former Royal government, for which he was to receive 550*l.* he had delivered it to their successors in the time of Jacobinism, and that the value paid him in the depreciated assignats amounted to 12 livres. I did not neglect, as you may very well suppose, that corner of the Museum, where are the monumental busts of the most eminent poets; Racine, the Virgil of the French language; Moliere, and La Fontaine, to whom no poets of any age or country, can be compared; and Boileau, who may be compared to Pope, are placed as they deserved to be, in conspicuous stations. This last, with the correctness of Pope, with more delicacy of expression, and at least as much genius, had the difficult part to fill of a courtier, who depends upon the regard of a monarch, the vainest of mankind, and yet wishes to retain the reputation of integrity and freedom of speech; upon being told once by a person, who wished to overrule his objections to some literary production, that the king had already declared himself to be of a different opinion; God forbid, Sir, said Boileau, that his majesty should ever understand these things as well as I do; and when he was put to a still harder trial, when the king showed him some lines he had just composed, and asked his opinion of them: nothing Sir, was his answer, nothing is impossible to your majesty; you wished to write bad verse, and you have succeeded. I should be sorry that the collection which forms this Museum should be broken up, as it is reputed to be the intention of government in order to restore the different monuments to the churches,

they were taken from; to me it is far more interesting than any other exhibition in Paris, and I am much mistaken, if the young men of various nations, who visit the curiosities of the capital of France, do not leave this ancient monastery with impressions far more conducive to morality, than those which are made by the irregular gods and naked goddesses of Ancient Greece, at the Louvre. "Let us visit the tombs of the illustrious dead," says Godwin, "let us indulge all the reality we can now have of a sort of conference with them; obdurate must be the heart of him, who brings away no good feelings from such a visit." The next object deserving of your attention along the line we have traced, is the ancient Abbey of St. Germain des Pres, which having been originally a temple of Isis, or of Ceres, was afterwards a convent of Benedictine monks with great estates, and fortified for defence like an immense citadel, until the increase of Paris brought it within the walls; it is now the residence of a *Traiteur*, and the principal office for procuring post-horses, and a part is still applied to the purpose of a military prison; it was here in part that those shocking scenes were perpetrated in '92, which I shall not shock you with a recital of. When Henry the IVth surprized the suburbs in 1589, he went up into the steeple of the Abbey church to take a better view of the town, attended by a single monk, and declared when he got down again, that the idea of Jaques Clement, and of his knife, had haunted his imagination at finding himself alone with a monk, in so retired a place. Follow-

ing the line, you leave the ancient church of St. Sulpice on the right; it is one of the handsomest in Paris, and appears to much greater advantage since the seminary has been taken down. On the left where the streets—and of the Petits Bourbon meet, stood the hotel of that implacable Duchess of Montpensier, who never forgave Henry III. for having spoken contemptuously of her person. The Luxembourg, where I may now suppose you arrived, is a large and handsome palace; it was built by Mary of Medicis, in the best style of Italian architecture; it was formerly the residence of Monsieur, now Louis the XVIII. the garden which has been enlarged by a portion of what was once the garden of the Chartreux, affords a delightful walk; it appears larger than that of the Tuileries, though not so splendid. The palace served, during the the time of Robespierre, as a prison, and you may have seen in the works of Miss Williams, a very interesting account of her detention there, and of her conversation with Silery and others, who were confined in a room adjoining that in which she and her sisters were detained. The Directory restored it in some measure to the original purpose, for which it was built, and resided there during their administration; it is now partly in possession of Prince Joseph, and partly assigned to the use of the conservative Senate, who sit there occasionally in a very handsome room, and to as little purpose as the tribunes do in theirs. A noble staircase leads up to their hall, and the whole of the ascent is lined with the statues of such generals as have

died during the revolution. The first husband of the Empress, the Count de Beauharnois, is among the number, though he perished by the guillotine, and is placed next to the door at which the Empress enters, when she attends as usual, to the opening of the sessions. Such a figure must, I should think, excite some strange ideas in her mind, when she passes so close to it; he was a man of fashion and quality, and lived a great deal at court, which accounts for the facility with which his widow has been able to accommodate herself to the etiquette of her new situation. She very narrowly escaped sharing the fate of her husband, and owed her safety in all probability to her personal attractions. Their son, who has been lately married to the princess of Bavaria, was, fortunately for him, overlooked, but his friends, to remove him still more from observation, bound him apprentice to a joiner, who was a hard master, and used frequently to chastise him; he is now regent of Italy, but might at this moment have been at work upon a table or a chair, in the Rue St. Honorè, had not his mother attracted the attention of a Corsican officer, who thought, and who thought right, that he might make his fortune by marrying her. The palace of the Luxembourg has been long famous for the valuable pictures it contains in two spacious galleries, and to those of Rubens, and of Vernet, have been lately added several distinguished productions of modern masters, and particularly of David. Those of Rubens, which are twenty-four in number, comprise the history of Mary of Medici, from her birth

to her reconciliation with her son, which I believe, forms the subject of the last picture. Had the painter continued her history, he would have found it very difficult to soften the subsequent scenes of it into any thing like compliment. She was driven from court by the intrigues of him whom she had placed about the person of her son, and died at a distance from France, after passing many years in exile, and almost in want. I have heard the works of Rubens much extolled, by all who could pretend to appreciate their merit, and the execution must strike every one as admirable; but there is a mixture of allegory and history, of Paganism and Christianity, of truth and fiction, which the understanding revolts at. There are ideas which the mind admits of in poetry, and to which the imagination in some measure even gives a local habitation and a name, that should never enter into the composition of a picture. D'Alembert indeed says, that no figure should be admitted in poetry which might not bear being represented on canvass; but surely he is wrong, and every one would be shocked at the introduction of imaginary beings into scenes of real life in painting, when the same circumstance in poetry gives rise to no such feeling. When Goldsmith says,

“Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,”

he conveys an agreeable idea to the mind, but how would it be possible for a painter to express as much without violating the rules of propriety and common sense? At the flight of the holy family

into Egypt, we readily admit them to have been under the peculiar guidance of Providence, but the same subject, all-sacred as it is, is rendered almost ludicrous by the representation of a great, stout, well-made, broad-shouldered angel, who walks before, and leads the ass by a halter. Mary of Medici had a handsome face, but was clumsy in her person, nor is it possible to conceive a more unbecoming dress than the one the painter gives her. Had the taste of Rubens been improved by the models of ancient times, as that of David has been, these pictures, excellent as they are, would still have been more agreeable to look at. The establishment of the English Benedictines was never very considerable, and only remarkable formerly for the body of James II. which was kept unburied by these good fathers; they hoped that the time would come, when a restoration in England, might enable them to convey it with becoming pomp to the vault of Henry VII. in Westminster Abbey; their property shared the fate of other church property during the revolution, and their place of worship has been converted into an ordinary dwelling-house; the few of the fathers that remain, subsist upon a small pension allowed by the government. I went into the *Traiteur's*, within a few doors of the place, where I had been told that some of the remaining fathers occasionally dined, and found one of them there. This gentleman informed me, that the Prior, who was far advanced in life, and very infirm, had caused himself to be removed to a house in the neighbourhood, from the window of which



he might every day behold their former church. He confirmed to me the report, which I had heard, of the king of Great Britain allowing the Cardinal of York a pension of 4000*l.* a year, and his Jacobitism relented so far as to make him allow it was a good action. I have conversed with an old Scotch gentleman upon this subject, and have seen the tears run down his cheeks in speaking of the misfortunes of the Stuarts, and of this very act of bounty, which had become necessary to the decent subsistence of the chief of the family.\* We are become so philosophical, so metaphysical indeed, in matters of government, in America, that we are apt to deride those feelings, on which our ancestors prided themselves, and to consider loyalty to a Sovereign, and attachment to his family, as the illusions of phrenzy, or the deceptions of falsehood; it is, however, be assured, a noble and a generous principle, and inferiour only, as Hume observes, in speaking of the devotedness of the family of Wyndham to Charles the second, to the more enlarged and enlightened affection for a legal constitution; and indeed is very frequently blended with it, though unconsciously, in the same mind.

The Cardinal had suffered in common with the other dignitaries of the Roman Church, from the rapacity and cruelty of the French republick, and

\* L'indifference et le dedain pour les choses exaltées sont devenus le type de la Grace, et les plaisanteries sont maintenant dirigées contre l'interet qu'on peut mettre à tout qui n'a pas dans ce monde un resultat positif.

Mad. de Stael, de l'Allemagne.

The frivolous Philosophy of Voltaire has extended to this new world of ours, and we embrace with it, with Europe yet smoaking (encore toute fumante) before our eyes.

after flying for shelter to various places, and even to Corfu, was living in obscurity, and in circumstances of great distress, at Vienna, when the generous offers of the king of England was communicated to him. I hope you have seen his letter of acceptance; it expresses his gratitude very feelingly, and in the English language, with a little and not ungraceful tincture of the Italian idiom. He shortly after, it is said, had the satisfaction of making some presents to the heir apparent of England, which were the more acceptable, in as much as they were connected in the superstition of former times with the rights of Sovereignty. This venerable personage has been now some years dead, but continued to accept the bounty of the king of England to the last. By his will he bequeathed some interesting family documents to the Prince Regent, and desired that the collar of the garter, which he had used, should be sent to him as to the Sovereign of the order, and his executor having accompanied these bequests with a request, that the Prince would assist him in the erection of a monument to the deceased Cardinal, his request was acquiesced in, and what is perhaps no less singular, and as little to have been expected as any part of this interesting anecdote, the expense incurred upon the occasion, was paid out of the surplus of the sum provided by France for the removal from Paris to Rome of the works of art, which had belonged to that city. This affecting reconciliation between the two rival families of Stuart and of Hanover, will have put an end, I trust, to the idle story of

the first pretender, (as he was called,) being a suppositious child ; a story which was as disgraceful to the principles of the revolution of 1688, as it is to the American Revolution, to pretend, that it arose from the cruel oppression, as our orators tell us on the 4th of July, of the mother country over the Colonies. The revolution in both instances arose from a much better and more dignified source, from a proud sense of that liberty which an Englishman (and we also were then Englishmen) was entitled to by the laws of his country. We resisted, as the English in 1688 did, not to *become*, but to *remain*, free.

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## LETTER LXIV.

MY DEAR E——,

NEARLY opposite to the English Benedictines, stood the convent of the Carmelites, where Madame de la Valiere retired from the torments of jealousy, and the struggles of a wounded conscience ; you will see in one of Madame de Sevigné's letters a description of those remains of beauty, which were still to be admired in this lady after so many years of austere devotion and self-denial. Her answer to Madame de Montespan, who asked if she was really as happy at the Carmelites as the world pretended, is perhaps as good a definition of a convent life, as could be given. "I will not pretend to say that I

am happy, was the answer, but I am satisfied." A part of the ancient convent has been converted to a very good use; it has been made to accommodate the abbe Sicard, of whose success in the instruction of the deaf and dumb, I will give you some account hereafter. A little higher up the street, is the Val de Grace, a very handsome building, formerly a church, and erected by Anne of Austria, in gratitude to heaven for the birth of a son, who was afterwards Louis XIV. The front is in a very magnificent style, but the handsome altar, the pavement of marble in different compartments, and the vaulted roof of inimitable sculpture, were what principally engaged the attention, and commanded the admiration of every traveller; it is now a magazine of stores for the army. Not far from the Val de Grace is the ancient abbey of Port Royal, formerly the retreat of many pious and distinguished persons, who amused themselves in their seclusion from the world by various publications on literary subjects, and endeavoured ineffectually indeed, and in some instances injudiciously perhaps, to check the progress of irreligion and immorality. It was their misfortune to attract the jealousy of the government by something independent in their retired meditative life, and to suffer themselves to be embarrassed by the mysterious discussions which grew out of Jansenism, which, from an obscure dispute whether certain proposition were, or were not, in a book which nobody read, assumed at length the appearance of a party, that Louis XIV. thought infected by republican ideas. He had objected to

some officer's accompanying the Duke of Orleans into Spain, on a report of his being a Jansenist, but withdrew his objection upon being told, that the officer, so far from being a Jansenist, did not even believe in God. This abbey, like the convent of the Carmelites, has been applied to a very worthy use ; it is the great Foundling Hospital of Paris, and there are annually upon an average, about six thousand children received there. No questions are asked of the persons who bring them, and after having been taken care of for ten days or a fortnight, they are sent into the country to nurses hired for that purpose. I have heard a Frenchman compare, with exultation, the facility of reception at the foundling hospital in Paris, with the difficulties which the wretched mother would experience in similar circumstances in London. But I question whether the custom in Paris does not, to a very great degree, promote the evil it is meant to alleviate. The matron of the institution is a very sensible and well behaved old lady ; she told me, that she had for more than fifty years, fulfilled the same duty at the former foundling hospital and here, and that upwards of 300,000 children had passed through her hands. It would be a melancholy fact to ascertain how few of the 300,000 are alive at this moment, and interesting, perhaps, to trace the destiny of some of them. Formerly, children were brought here from all parts of the kingdom, but the matron assured us, that the capital alone had furnished for some years past as many as the hospital could receive, and that during the

last year the number had amounted to nearly 7000 ; a sad proof of the increasing libertinism in Paris, or of increasing poverty, or perhaps of both. There was something extremely affecting in this assemblage of our little helpless fellow- creatures ranged along in their cradles, or in their beds, with neatness and apparent comfort, treated as members of the great brotherhood of mankind, and receiving that succour without which they must have perished. In the chapel of the hospital is the statue of the founder, St. Vincent de Paul, and surely if the rank in heaven of any individual mortal after death is to be presumed, it may be his. The first services of St. Vincent were in his character of preceptor in a noble family of Paris, sometime in the commencement of the century before the last, and during the reign of Louis XIII. but he was soon, by his natural activity, carried into scenes more suited to that strong benevolence of soul, which animated all his actions ; and as a slave at Tunis, was made to endure for a time, the worst perhaps, of all situations that man is exposed to from the cruelty and violence of his fellow-creatures. Having for some years afterwards officiated as chaplain general to the galleys, he returned to Paris, and found means to establish three different orders of charitable persons, devoting themselves to the service and assistance of the unfortunate, and making it the employment of their lives to penetrate those retreats where modest poverty conceals itself, and “lonely want retires to die.” But his great work was the establishment of the Foundling Hospital. It had been

long customary to sell such new-born children as had been left exposed by their parents, and seemed likely to live, at 20 sous a piece, in the Rue St. Landry, and these were purchased either for purposes of deception in rich families, where a child was required to effect the descent of property, or to relieve some unfortunate, or some diseased mother from the inconveniences of milk. His first step was to found an Hospital for twelve children, and he was soon afterwards able by his zealous exhortation, conveyed in the most affecting eloquence, and by the gift of all he possessed, to save such as were found at the porches of the different churches. Perceiving, however, that the warmth of that charity which had procured him the co-operation of so many persons at first, was beginning to abate, that the children he had saved would be again deserted, and those outrages to humanity, which he had so successfully resisted, would soon recommence, he called a meeting of all who had ever approved of his proposals, and assisted his pious views; by far the greater part of the company consisted of persons of your sex, and I am sure you will easily conceive their feelings, when the good man, having ordered a number of the children that had been rescued from destruction, to be placed in the midst of the church, where the meeting was held, ascended the pulpit, and concluded a very affecting address in something like the following words. "Behold then these little creatures, whom their own cruel mothers had forsaken, and whom you, ladies, have adopted as your own; for-

get now for a moment, the tender tie which unites their destiny to yours, and do all of you conceive yourselves called upon to act as their judges, and to decide their fate. If that pity, which has hitherto preserved these helpless objects, be withdrawn, they must all perish; their lives, then, depend upon your decision; tell me therefore, sisters, shall these children live, or must they all die?" They could answer him only with their tears, but so powerful were the effects of this happy moment, that the means were immediately furnished for establishing a Foundling Hospital, and for endowing it with a perpetual rent of about 2000*l.* sterling. It is a circumstance which ought to be known, for the honour of human nature in its worst moments, that amid all the devastation of pictures and of statues, which took place during the revolution, those of St. Vincent were always respected. In the statue which I now allude to, he is represented as descending the steps of some public building with a new-born infant wrapt up in his cloak and against his bosom, and the sculptor has very happily expressed a degree of joy in the good man's countenance, at having saved a fellow-creature, mingled at the same time with a sentiment of regret at the appearance of another infant, who lies lifeless at his feet. I cannot conceive how people should crowd about the Apollo, or the Laocoon of the Louvre, and leave such a statue as this unnoticed. Returning down the Rue St. Jaques, you pass the Val de Grace, the Carmelites, and the English Benedictines, and arrive immediately after



at the Pantheon ; this was originally intended as a church, and it was meant that it should receive the shrine of St. Genevieve, who, from a humble shepherdess on the banks of the Seine, had become, after a lapse of ages, the patroness of Paris. The shrine was to have been placed immediately under the centre of the superb and highly ornamented dome, that rises to the height of 305 feet above the pavement, the faithful might then, from all quarters of the church, have had easy access to the remains of this holy maiden, to whose particular intercession in heaven, it was supposed, the inhabitants of Paris owed whatever they had enjoyed of happiness and prosperity. It was customary upon some great occasion, as when rain was required for the fruits of the earth, or when there was too much rain, to carry this revered shrine in procession, and it was then adorned with every thing valuable that the company of jewellers could furnish. Twenty persons dressed in white, and with naked feet, were the bearers, and St. Marcel himself was brought from a neighbouring church by his votaries, to join in the procession ; but Mad. de Sevigné will give you the best account of this solemnity,\* and will tell you that it required ten more men at least, to

\* When in the year 1281, the body of Margaret Queen of Scotland was to be removed from the original place of interment, to be deposited in a costly shrine, it became on a sudden so heavy, says some ancient author, quoted by Lord Hailes, that the bearers were obliged to set it down, and in proportion as more persons were employed to raise it, it still became heavier ; it was at length observed that the tomb of Malcomb, husband of Margaret, was near, and that having been attached to each other through life, it was probable that she was

carry each of the saints home again, when their shrines had once approached within a short distance of each other. They had been acquainted in this world some centuries ago, and had retained an inclination for each other's company ever since. From this outrageous degree of nonsense the mind of the Parisian passed, as might have been expected, during the ferment of the revolution, to the opposite extreme. What became of the gallant St. Marcel, I know not, but the shrine of St. Genevieve was ransacked, and her remains, after having been treated with every species of insult, were conveyed to the place de Grève, and burnt by the executioner. The church now become the Pantheon, is a very handsome edifice, and is intended, it is said, to receive the remains of those illustrious men, who do honour to their country by their writings, and their exploits in war. The remains of Mirabeau had been deposited there, but they were removed on the discovery of a correspondence which he had carried on with the court, as were those of Marat, after the fall of Jacobinism ; and in order to avoid such inconsistencies hereafter, it is now understood, that no one, however distinguished, can be interred in the Pantheon, until ten years shall have rolled away after his death. The tombs of Rousseau and of Voltaire are, as yet, the only monuments to be seen there, and as these have been

determined not to move, till equal honours were paid to his remains ; and so it proved, for as soon as bearers were appointed to raise the body of Malcomb, the Queen suffered herself to be removed with the greatest ease.

*Annals of Scotland.*

placed on a lower floor below the pavement, they appear to very little advantage, and do no credit to the intention of the government. I am surprised that none of the wits of Paris should have imagined a conversation in the nature of Lord Lyttleton's Dialogues of the dead, between these two great authors, as they remain here, side by side, during the long and tedious nights of winter; they might each very properly allow that a fair experiment had been made of their principles in matters of religion and politicks; that all power had been for a time concentrated in, and exercised by the people, and Christianity driven out from among Frenchmen; and that the result had been fatal to good government, and to every sort of morality,\* to the arts and sciences, and to all the decencies of common life. A noble prospect of all Paris is commanded from the top of the Pantheon, and as I foresee that the objects I have yet to speak of may occupy several letters, I will avail myself of the situation, and conduct you, in imagination, to the upper gallery, whence we may cast a rapid glance over the greater part of Paris. The city, divided into nearly two equal portions by the river, is at our feet, and the circular line of barriers at the outlet of every street which communicates with the country, shows how the inhabitants of this great metropolis are shut in whenever their master pleases, as sheep are by a butcher. A good map

\* The King said to me one day in a low voice, says Mr. Hue, pointing to the works of Voltaire and of Rousseau, "those two men have ruined France."

and some previous knowledge of the city, enables one easily to point out the different churches, hospitals, and palaces, and to distinguish the military school, where the present Emperour received his education, at the expense of the late King; the Hotel of the Invalids, and the Champ de Mars. It was on this fatal spot, that Louis XVI. accepted of a constitution which was his destruction; it was here that Bailly, one of the most humane and enlightened men of the age, drank to the very lees the cup of human misery; and it was here, that the representatives of the nation could, for six years successively, swear eternal hatred to that form of government to which they have since sworn allegiance. The Hotel of the Invalids is particularly conspicuous, and the more to our satisfaction, from our knowing that two or three hundred officers, and from three to four thousand soldiers are comfortably accommodated there for the rest of their lives. You will see a description of this great and magnificent building in any book of travels into France, and particularly of the dome; which, though superb in execution, was a very useless and costly addition to so charitable an establishment. Several hundred standards, taken in war, are here displayed in a very graceful manner. I saw three or four English among them; but what surprised me was a jack and ensign of the American navy; I think our ambassadour might be directed to inquire upon what occasion they were taken, for no such event was ever, I believe, known in America. I observed among the standards, that

those of Russia and of the German powers were dark and gloomy and torn with bullets, those of Italy were gaudy and for the most part entire, and those of Turkey were singular, with a certain semi-barbarian air, which is not unbecoming. The kitchen of the hotel is a dark and gloomy cavern, where Polyphemus might have stretched himself at full length, after having supped on two of the companions of Ulysses, and it seemed every way worthy of such a master; but the library made us amends; it is a light and handsome room, where an excellent collection of books is provided for the use of the pensioners, and where I had the pleasure to see several of them reading at a very convenient circular table, while others were looking over maps, or taking notes. At the upper end of the room is a picture of Bonaparte, when first consul, by his favourite painter, David, in which, though I have heard it much commended, I could see but very little merit. He is represented as on horseback, at the moment of passing the St. Bernard. But no horse, of such horses, as Homer says as are born in these degenerate days, could possibly gallop in such a place, nor could any man keep his seat in such a position. The whole composition, in short, is defective. I would have seated him on one of those blocks of granite, which lie scattered over the surface of the little plain of St. Bernard, and were probably brought there by some great convulsion of nature; and I would have expressed in his countenance the pleasure which a great conqueror might be supposed to feel, at beholding his army

file off before him, after a successful struggle with difficulties which, to the rest of mankind, had appeared insurmountable. I would have made him smile with complacency, for I am told he has been seen to smile, and I would have rendered the whole picture as pleasing a representation as possible of the most brilliant event in the life of this singular man. But David has given him a dark and gloomy air; and, were it not for the insignia of command, one would suppose it the portrait of some individual of a troop of Spanish Banditti, who, after assassinating a traveller, was endeavouring to escape, at the risk of his neck, from the pursuit of the holy brotherhood. Between the Luxembourg, the Invalids, and the river, is the Fauxbourg St. Germain, where the greater part of the principal nobility resided at the time of the royal government. Their hotels are in general at the extremity of a court, separated from the street by high walls, and with spacious gardens behind. A great number of these have been sold as national property, and are converted into lumber houses or stores; for the new rich, who might alone apply such buildings to their former purposes, choose to be in the busier part of Paris, and nearer the Tuileries; but some are yet in possession of the rightful proprietor, and I am told that the best company, in the proper sense of the word, is still to be met with in the Fauxbourg St. Germain. Some few persons of noble birth who had originally taken a part in the revolution, have been since carried along by the torrent, and now fill offices in the government, or about the

person of the emperor; they are not many in number however, and it has not been without threats of banishment and confiscation to them, and all their connexions, that a few ladies of ancient name have been prevailed upon to stand upon the list of attendants on the empress. On visiting a cotton manufactory, I was surprised to find a Monsieur de Montmorency, and some other noblemen, of ancient and illustrious family also, among the directors of it; the Duke de Liancourt, whose travels in America have been published, has converted the castle of his ancestors into a similar establishment; he confines himself to a small corner, which serves for every purpose of housekeeping, and has been heard to declare that he never before knew what happiness was. I have, upon two or three occasions, found myself in the company of this ancient nobility, and have been struck with their cheerful acquiescence to the will of fortune, and at that dignified politeness of demeanour, which does not exist elsewhere. Immediately below us, for I must still suppose you in the gallery of the Pantheon, is the quarter once called the University, from being chiefly the property of that ancient body which had been erected into a corporation by the earlier kings of France, and was in possession of very extensive municipal rights. The two inhabited islands of the river are before you on the north; that of the city, which has the palace of Justice at one extremity, and the church of Notre Dame near the other, is a collection of narrow dirty streets, and dark houses, of I know not

how many stories, and that of St. Louis consists of regular streets which cross each other at right angles; it was formerly the residence of people of the robe (as lawyers and judges are called in French,) and has now the appearance of one of our towns in America, at the time of the yellow fever. To the east and south-east of the Pantheon are the Fauxbourgs St. Victor and St. Marceau, remarkable for having furnished, during the whole of the revolution, a crowd of needy and desperate individuals, whom the different parties used as instruments against each other; and remarkable also for manners and customs, extremely remote from those of the brilliant parts of Paris. I should like, before we quitted the Pantheon, to give you some idea of that noble building, the purposes of which may be changed a great many times yet before it can be completely finished. It is in the best style of architecture, with a front composed of twenty-two Corinthian columns fifty-eight feet in height; fifty-two others of smaller dimensions surround the exterior of the dome; the interior of the building consists of four naves, decorated with one hundred and thirty Corinthian columns, and in the centre of these is the dome, which presents sixteen others, that support a spherical roof, from which rises a second and more elevated vault. It would, if finished, be such as you might suppose the Temple of Fame, in Roman or in Grecian times; and the present intention is, that the whole shall be surmounted by a colossal statue of the goddess, with all her attributes. From the Pantheon we will go



to the Gobelins, which have been so frequently and so well described, and then to the ancient church of St. Medard. There is no art perhaps, in which the first rude essays are more remote from subsequent perfection than that of tapestry. The veteran of the fish-market, with a face marked by bruises, and in all the glow of habitual intemperance, is not more removed in appearance from the *elegante*, who shivers at a breeze, than the hangings we sometimes meet with under the name of tapestry, are from the production of the Gobelins. Their performance is always a copy from some picture, and their mode of working resembles weaving rather than embroidery; the threads are perpendicular. These they intermingle in all the infinite variety of colours that the subject requires, working on the wrong side, reversing every thing, consequently, as an engraver does, when he works without the assistance of a mirror, and unable, but in imagination to trace the progress of their work; they sometimes rise, indeed, and go round the frame to observe the resemblance to the original, and occasionally undo a part of what they had completed. The workmen are in the employment of government, and receive less wages than a negro man does for sawing wood in America. They are, as you may suppose, with such wages, rather meanly dressed, and have a squalid unwholesome appearance, from being so continually confined to a sitting posture. To approach one of these persons at work, and to behold what rises under his forming hands, is to have an idea of

something like creation—Zeuxis, selecting from the assembled beauty of Greece those traits, which might best become the goddess of love ; the bold approach of some, the reluctance of others, the bashfulness which hides itself behind a companion, and the perfection of the human form in every limb and feature are, I might almost say, divinely expressed ; other copies of a great variety of the best pictures are to be seen here ; but I was principally struck with that of Zeuxis painting Venus, and that of admiral Coligni, who meets his murderer at the door, and seems to say to him—Young man, respect these grey hairs.

## LETTER LXV.

MY DEAR E——,

THERE is nothing in the ancient church of St. Medard that would be thought deserving the attention of a stranger ; there are no Corinthian columns, no pictures by eminent masters, no superb altar-piece, nor any dome suspended as it were by magick, in the air ; it is a simple and old-fashioned place of worship, recommended only by its intrinsick sanctity, and by the memory of the Abbe Paris. You will have seen an account of this celebrated Abbe in Voltaire's Age of Louis XIV. of the miracles that were operated at his tomb, and of the measures taken by the government to put

an end to the confluence of people there from all parts of the kingdom. As the sacristan was absent, his wife accompanied me about the church, and I soon perceived, that she was a firm believer in the Abbe. The world, she said, was become sadly incredulous; and except a sick lady from Lyons, I was the only stranger who for several months had visited their church, and yet who could doubt the powerful intercession of the Abbe in Heaven, for, laying aside the numbers of miraculous cures performed in the last century, was not his influence apparent in the preservation of their church, not the slightest ornament of which had been carried away or injured during the whole of the revolution? She wished me also to take notice by climbing up into a window, that though we were now in the dead of winter, the tomb of the Abbe was green with vegetation, and assured me, that if I returned at another hour, her husband would find means to get access for me within the enclosure that is still walled up, and that I might procure some of the earth from about the grave, or a piece of the tombstone in case of sickness in my family hereafter. There are some subjects upon which the reason that Providence has given us, must embolden us to reject all human testimony. The firm persuasion of the witness, and even of the person who has been miraculously operated upon, are to no purpose; it is still more probable that they are both deluded by appearances, or misled by their own prejudices and passions, than that the Almighty should have suspended the laws

of nature. If human testimony were to prevail, there would be no end of miracles. Racine, the most polished scholar, and one of the most amiable and upright men of the age, and Pascal, a genius of still superiour order, were both firmly persuaded of the truth of the miraculous cure which took place at Port Royal,\* and I have seen two thick volumes of those performed at the tomb of the Abbe. They were published by a Mr. Carre de Montgeron, a counsellor of the Parliament of Paris, who was converted from infidelity by what he saw, and was therefore convinced of: he had been a man of very irregular life, and tells us in the preface, how his attention was first awakened to the spiritual dangers of his situation. He had disguised himself in a female dress, and was on his way towards a convent, where he was

\* A Mr. de la Potterie had brought with him from Venice a thorn of the identical crown, which the Jews once placed in cruel mockery upon the head of our Saviour, and this, after suffering it to be adored for a time on the altars of the principal churches in Paris, he had presented to the Sisterhood of Port Royal, where the Novices having been admitted to adore it; one of them who had long suffered from the effects of a cancerous ulcer in the face, was instantaneously cured. She was the niece of the celebrated Pascal, one of the most scientifick, as well as the most pious men of the times, and he bore testimony to the fact; as did Felix, the famous surgeon, who certified, that the disorder had baffled all his skill, and that it had disappeared in a way which he could not but suppose supernatural. Racine was also persuaded of the truth of this wonderful occurrence, and the relation which he published upon the occasion is one of the most elegant historical compositions in the French language.

Voltaire, who does not venture to assert that such respectable persons would lend their countenance to a deception, supposes that a twin Sister was substituted in the place of the person afflicted.

to be introduced by a lady, who had lent her assistance to the plot, and was already flattering his imagination with an idea of the opportunities he should have of pursuing his projects against a young person, who had fled for shelter there from his pursuits, when the horses took fright, the carriage was broken to pieces, and he and his companions very narrowly escaped with their lives. But to return to the subject of miraculous cures, I have no doubt, in many instances, either of the veracity of the persons' relating, nor of the cure performed, but I doubt the intervention of Providence ; and yet I confess myself at a loss how to explain the difficulty. Hope and fear, and all the forms which the human imagination can be made to take, are powerful agents in the hands of skilful men ; they are frequently also applied unconsciously by man himself to his own use ; but there are cases in which this solution would be of no avail. The tractors of Perkins have been applied, and with great success (in cases where there was no room for, no possibility of imagination) to infants, to persons asleep, and to brutes. Nor can our reason take shelter in any hypothesis connected with electricity, for the same cures have been performed by fictitious tractors made of wood, or of slate, as by those which were from the manufactory of Perkins himself. Leaving, therefore, the miracles performed at St. Medard, and at Port Royal, to be attributed to the imagination of the patient, or the effect of that deep impression of supernatural truth, which is denominat-

ed faith, we must still allow, that there are cures in which we are to look for another agent. To occupy the attention of a person very strongly will generally cure him of the hiccough, and sometimes of the toothach, and a salutary crisis in some acute cases has been produced, it is said, by the simple application of the hand, as by a vital principle which emanates from one body to another; but this again would lead to animal magnetism, which has contributed so much to bewilder some men, and has been made such an instrument for sordid purposes by others, that the secret of nature of which there was a glimpse, is now lost sight of, and perhaps forever. It was my good fortune one evening, not very long ago, to sit next to a person whom I soon found to be a believer in all the wonders of animal magnetism, and who offered, if I would call upon him for the purpose, to give me any information I might desire, in addition to the little I had been able to learn in the Encyclopedia. I was satisfied, however, with the conversation of the evening, during which I heard a person of some distinction in the literary world talk of that will, which operates from us, upon the objects around, which adds force, real bodily force, to our efforts, and of that improvement in some of our senses, that increase even of our knowledge, which we receive in sleep. Surely the account of miracles performed at the tomb of the Abbe Paris, is not so ridiculous. But it is time we should leave the ancient church of St. Medard, and go to the Royal garden of plants down to which the

Rue Neuve d'Orleans will lead you. This garden affords an agreeable walk, and one who could have the advantage of frequenting it regularly for some months in company with a man of science, might, in the most pleasing manner, become acquainted with all the varieties of the animal, the vegetable, and the mineral reign. I have never, since my curiosity was first gratified, derived much satisfaction from seeing rare animals; they are frequently ugly, (what for instance can be more so than a camel?) and have always an air of melancholy, or convey that idea at least, and however ferocious their nature may be, we cannot but pity their long and useless captivity. It is otherwise with plants, they are agreeable objects in themselves, and without being at all acquainted with botany, I was glad to have this opportunity of seeing several sorts, the fruits of which have been converted by the real or imaginary wants of Europe, into necessities of life. At the lower extremity of the garden is the river over which there has been lately erected an iron bridge. To wander hence to the building, which serves as a Museum, at the other extremity, must in summer be delightful; the rarest plants are removed out of the hot-houses, and placed to advantage, and a sort of tribute seems paid by nature to the Parisian from all the quarters of the earth, as he takes his evening walk; an artificial eminence too has been contrived on one side, where a winding road, and some rocky irregularities, and a growth of pines, in all the apparent wildness of nature, form

an agreeable contrast, with the formality of the garden. The Museum is a building of no grandeur externally ; but the contents of three long and spacious rooms within, would reward the curiosity of a traveller, who had come even further than from America. The specimens and seed of every species of fruit and grain, the whole family of terrestrial animals, placed so as to represent life, from the elephant, the cameleopard, and the elk, to the beautifully formed antelope-deer, who, made for speed, and yet with spreading antlers in case of necessity for defence, is not larger than a rat : and the whole race of birds, from the Ostrich to the Humbird, with the almost endless catalogue of reptiles, and of insects, in all their various and successive changes, are ranged along in order, as if ready for embarkation in Noah's Ark. The inhabitants of the water too, of the great rivers in the south, and of the sea, from the hippopotamus to the flying-fish, and down to the lowest orders of being, may be here passed in review, and one may trace a long chain of animated nature along its various links of connexion, from man downwards, which would seem to prove, that we are all of one family. There are many parts of the great chain to whose relationship I have no objection, they are like very distant cousins, who know nothing about us, and who give us no trouble ; but there is something very disagreeable and very mortifying in the appearance of those who come immediately after us. A person skilled in mineralogy and chemistry might pass many days successively



to very good purpose in one of these spacious rooms; he might there examine at his leisure the various sorts of primitive earth combined with substances, of which they take the name, and which are useful either in medicine, or the arts; and he might see specimens of every kind of stone, from such as must be nearly coeval with creation, to those of a subsequent period, comprehending every species of limestone, from the finest marble down to common chalk, and portions of pudding-stone, either from some rude mass, which has astonished the traveller on a mountain top, or with the shape and colouring of the beautiful Scotch pebble. He would find samples also of every kind of volcanick production; of basalts, which are supposed to be the effect of submarine ejections; of lava, which is composed of the same materials as the basalt, but the produce of an eruption when the volcano was no longer covered by the sea; of pumice stone, and of some crystalized substances which are found near *Ætna* and *Vesuvius*. I had before seen a variety of crystals; they form an object of profit to the inhabitants of *Chamounie*, but I had no idea of their ever being found of a size which admitted of their being worked into vases and chandeliers, of which there are some specimens in the Museum; together with these, are those productions of the earth of a nearly similar nature, to which the common consent of mankind has for time immemorial attached an idea of great value, under the name of precious stones. The diamond

is generally placed first upon the splendid list, and has lost nothing of its supereminence, I find, on being ascertained, I had almost said detected, to be a concretion of charcoal, become divested, in a long succession of ages no doubt, of certain earthy particles, and certain salts ; nature indeed, as Chaptal says, is never perhaps more fruitful than when seemingly at the moment of extinction. But how this concretion takes place, or what the expression correctly understood implies, I am very far indeed from pretending to say. I believe it, however, on the assertions of the learned, supported by experiments, which have been repeatedly made. Upon a Diamond's being submitted to the action of heat, it was found to emit by combustion the same species of gas that is emitted by charcoal, and it is known by some late experiments to have, in common with that substance, the property of converting iron into steel. It is singular that Sir Isaac Newton should upwards of one hundred years ago have surmised, in this and in other instances, what has since appeared to be the process of nature. But this great man must have possessed faculties very far removed indeed from the utmost to which the human mind had ever before attained, or has since reached ; and was, I believe, as Hume has so well expressed it, the greatest and rarest genius that ever arose for the ornament and instruction of mankind. Specimens are also to be seen here of iron, tin, copper, and lead, such as they offer themselves to view, in that sort of disguise, of which human industry soon

strips them; and of gold and silver ore, as they slumber in the mine; and there is a most comprehensive collection of fossils. By the term fossil, you are to understand such of the animal and vegetable creation as are found buried in the earth; of these some are petrified, and others remain in their natural state; but it is a circumstance common to both, that they are scarcely ever found in places, to which, according to what we know of the present order of nature, they can have originally belonged. The bones of the elephant, of the rhinoceros, and of the mammoth, which seem to have ennobled the Natural History of America, and of other creatures of nearly equal size, to which no names have been applied, are found scattered over deserts, which these animals were never known to inhabit, or intermixed in the most inexplicable manner with the various sorts of marine fossils; it would seem as if these had been exposed to some great catastrophe, which the rest of the terrestrial creation had escaped, or perhaps their bones being of a more solid texture, have been able to resist those causes of destruction, which have obliterated every appearance of weaker animals, who may have existed at the same time, and whose remains could not, from their situation, be preserved as those of fish have been, from every external injury, and from the effects of the atmosphere. I mentioned to you in a former letter, and when this subject was first presented to my mind, that no remains of man, notwithstanding the most diligent researches, had been ever seen, and I find that such is still the

case;\* not a single stone, which appears to have passed through human hands, not a brick, nothing in short, in the least connected with the antediluvian existence of man, has ever been discovered; and yet I cannot but believe, that creation in all its parts was a single act of the Almighty, and that the chain of existence has been always perfect. Insects we find existed, by their impressions left in quarries of stone, and trees and plants we are sure did, for some of these last are of sorts which it would seem required cultivation. They are frequently found so deep in the bowels of the earth, and so transformed into other substances, yet with enough of their original appearance to ascertain their identity, and so remote from the soil and climate proper to their growth, that they must have been operated upon by the same great cause, which was so fatal to other parts of creation, which converted the ocean into dry land, and overwhelmed such portions of the globe as were habitable, with the waters of the sea. Those parts were perhaps not without human inhabitants, and the time may come, either soon, or when century after century shall have rolled away, that some great convulsion of nature may again shake the pillars which support the now habitable surface of the earth, that it may subside

\* Unless indeed the vestiges of labour intended apparently for the convenience of shipping on the lofty mountains of the Crimea (see De Tott) may be considered as such. In that case the Euxine must have been a secluded sea, as the Caspian is now, and the Bosphorus may have been formed by a sudden burst, as the passage of l'Ecluse near Geneva is supposed to have been.

into the caverns which yawn full many a mile beneath perhaps, and that a passage being thus opened, the waters of the sea may again change their level, and human fossils being then attainable may be found in abundance, as those of marine and vegetable origin are now. The bed of the gulf stream would be then a valley like that of the Shenandoe, and the banks of Newfoundland; a continuation of which, it is said, may be traced by sounding as far almost as the coast of Ireland, might be the Alps of this new world. Whatever may have been, or may hereafter be the case, we shall never know; but I do not think it possible for the busiest, the gayest, or the most ambitious man in Paris to enter this part of the Museum, without being led into a train of serious ideas on this subject. If I was extremely gratified at the sight of the single fish taken from a quarry, which I had seen in Mr. de Luc's Cabinet at Geneva, you may conceive my surprise and satisfaction at finding myself in the midst of numbers of these animals in the most perfect preservation; some of them belong to species which are known to exist at present, though generally in distant seas, and others are unknown. The greater part are from a quarry near Verona, where fish of all sizes and in great numbers, are still found in a soft calcareous rock, which is below the extinguished volcano of Monte Bolca;\* the immediate cause which destroyed the myriads of

\* Monte Bolca is near Verona, and is formed of various fossils mingled promiscuously; it belonged to the celebrated Maffei, who bought it for about \$30.

Monte Bolca must always be a mystery, but it seems to have taken place at one instant of time, as if the wand of a magician had been waved over them, or the same electric shock had pervaded a whole region, and all its inhabitants. That their motions have been arrested by death without any previous pain or sense of danger, is evident from their being no marks of contortion or struggle in any of them; some, which have been split through the middle, have the undigested remains of the species they preyed upon still visible in the stomach, others are followed by smaller individuals, who were either their offspring, or accustomed to prey upon their offal, and there are some instances of others again, which were engaged in battle, when death put an end to the contest; one voracious animal of the eel tribe had already a third of his antagonist down his throat, when the terrible shock took place, which has kept his jaws distended ever since. There are also the head of a crocodile, and of an alligator, I believe, and several sorts of turtle and tortoises. I ought to inform you by the way, that the shells of a particular sort of this last animal, are the objects now known to have been during ages mistaken for human heads; while the tibia of the elephant was denominated the thigh bone of a giant; and people blessed themselves, that the race of these monstrous brethren of ours was extinct. The remains of the vegetable creation do not at the first view captivate our attention so forcibly, but the useful transformation which has taken place in substances that

were originally trees and plants, and the manner in which Providence has, if I may use the expression, condescended to make man amends for the ruin of former times, is interesting indeed. Nothing less than an abundant growth over the whole of what is now ocean, could have furnished the inexhaustible strata of coal to be found in various parts of the earth, besides a great variety of fossil wood under various forms; sometimes entire trees are found; how they have resisted the causes of decomposition which have operated upon the rest of the mass is inconceivable; but it is apparent that they once floated at the mercy of the waves, for they are stripped of all appearance of branches and of roots, and have orifices which can only have been made by the smaller shell fish, or by the worm which is so destructive to ships in warm climates. A substance adherent to trees in their fossil state is frequently found upon the shores of the Baltick, in particular, and sometimes at the depth of two hundred feet under ground; this is what we call amber. It appears to have been formerly nearly liquid; some naturalists have supposed that it was once honey, and to have in that state given access to the little animals, that are now found incased in it; they are frequently in such perfect preservation that their species may be immediately recognised, and some of them therefore serve as witnesses of the great change of place, which vegetable as well as the large terrestrial and marine animals have been exposed to; for as similar insects exist only in the warmer latitudes, they must have floated thence

with the tree which furnished the substance they preyed upon, and into which they had incautiously ventured themselves.\* That wood has been converted into iron-stone, I have no difficulty in believing, from the samples I saw here, and there is a mine of iron ore in Russia, I find, which is made up in great measure of leaves, branches, and roots of trees, the particular species of which may be still ascertained. Had the same mass been left exposed to the action of humidity, for a course of ages, it might have become peat; in Africa, beneath the burning sands, it would probably have been converted into flint-stones, and there are situations in which, as has been already observed, it would have become coal. But I have said enough of the garden of plants, and of the Museum and Cabinet of Natural History, as it is called in French; if I said more, I might wander still further out of my depth than I find myself already; for my knowledge on these subjects is, I am sorry to confess it, extremely superficial. We will now return home-

\* Whatever may be the origin of iron, which is never, I believe, found in its native state, for the masses spoken of as such are probably meteorick. It is interesting to take a review of the various uses to which that valuable metal is applied: "It is now customary, it seems, to make cables, buoys, and water tanks; timber for ship-building, rafters for houses, pipes for the conveyance of water, and even barges for canal navigation, of iron;—and the time may come when we shall see ships of iron."—QUARTERLY REVIEW.

The process of acquiring it from stone was known in the time of Moses, we find, but the metal must have remained scarce down to the time of Homer, who places what we should call a pig of iron among the prizes to be contended for at the funeral games in honour of Patroclus.



wards by the Rue St. Victor, and passing the place Maubert, famous for the rude loquacity of the sellers of vegetables, enter the Island of the Cité by the bridge, which is opposite to that which takes its name from the ancient Cathedral, that we must next visit.

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## LETTER LXVI.

MY DEAR E——,

IF instead of continuing along the Rue St. Victor, I had crossed at once into the Rue St. Jacques, we should in our way have passed close to the Sorbonne, where I have been two or three times; not that any thing remains to be seen, or that the place itself inspires much respect from its utility, or sanctity in former days, but from the desire of conversing with a sculptor, who has the use of two or three rooms there. I had bespoken of him a small cast of St. Vincent de Paul, and wished to be sometimes present when he worked upon a statue he had then in hand; it was Gretry the composer, whom he was shaping out of a block of beautiful Grecian marble. In an adjoining room was another artist, whom I was also glad to visit in his workshop, though the legs and arms scattered about the entry, gave it the appearance of a giant's den. I found him upon one occasion occupied in taking a bust from the life, while the little old gentleman whose resemblance he was at work upon, sat so still and

with so composed a countenance, that one of our company, who is short-sighted, mistook him for a statue, and was extremely alarmed at seeing it move. This little old gentleman was no other than Tronchet, whose name will be most honourably transmitted to posterity, as one of the few who remained faithfully attached to Louis XVI. in his utmost need, exerting himself at the bar of the convention to preserve the life of the unhappy monarch, and to save the nation from the disgrace and danger of an action so cruel and so impolitick. How this good and generous man survived the consequences of his exertions I know not, but he is now a senator; the emperor knowing, as Cromwell did, how to avail himself of the countenance and talents of those, whom he cannot suppose attached to his person, but who, he is certain, have too much honour to betray the government, or to be engaged in conspiracies against him. You will see an account of the Sorbonne in the Encyclopedia. It had been established for the protection of faith and of good morals, but must have already degenerated to a great degree from the pious intentions of the founder, when the doctors of the establishment could sooth the scruples of Louis XIV. and tell him, as from holy writ, that the property of his subjects was his, and at his disposal. When I first saw this anecdote in the Memoirs of St. Simon, it reminded me of La Fontaine's fable of the animals sick of the plague.\* It was agreed, that they should all con-

\* Notwithstanding the servility of the Sorbonne, this great king, whose expenses were enormous, was frequently driven to very humili-

fess the crimes they had committed; and the lion began. He confessed, with sorrow, that he had not spared the neighbouring flocks, and that he had sometimes made so free as even to eat a shepherd; he was willing, therefore, if the rest thought proper, to devote himself for the general good, and to suffer death. But the fox soon consoled him. These shepherds, sir, said he, belong to a race that has the insolence to think itself our superiours; and as to the sheep, it was doing them a great deal of honour, sir, to devour them. Hume relates a very good story of this sort in the reign of James I. who had consulted two of the bishops at court about taking the money of the people. The good-natured monarch, though awkward and pedantick, was no enemy to wit.

The cathedral of Notre Dame is too much crowded with houses to be seen to advantage; it possesses, however, that solemn and stately air which distinguishes the best specimens of Gothick architecture. It is shaped as a cross, is 780 feet long and 144 broad, and of sufficient height, but it did not answer the expectations I had formed of the metropolitan church of a great empire. This

ating expedients in order to raise money. It was contrived upon one occasion that Samuel Bernard, the rich Jew banker, should cross his path in the gardens of Versailles, and the king affecting surprise, called to him, and proposed that, if he was fond of ornamental gardening, he should visit Marli on a given day. Bernard, who had no suspicion of the fate that awaited him, did so, and was so overwhelmed by the king's condescension, that the minister negotiated a very considerable loan with him that very evening; and the poor Jew is said never to have been his own man afterwards.—ST. SIMON.

sentiment was probably occasioned by the impression which the dome of the Pantheon had left upon my mind, and by the nakedness of the walls, which I had once seen covered with paintings and tapestry, and adorned with several handsome and venerable monuments. These were destroyed in great measure by the rage of republicanism in '93 together with all the sculptural and architectural ornaments on the outside of the church; where many headless kings and mutilated saints still remain, sad witnesses of the phrenzy of those times. It was here that Bonaparte was anointed emperor by the Pope, with not quite so many demonstrations of joy from the spectators within, or the mob without, as the paper of the day pretends, but with perfect complacency and submission; they gazed upon the ceremony and upon the procession, as they would have done upon any other splendid show, while those at a distance conversed about it, as they might have done about the coronation of a king of Persia. I saw his imperial robe, stiff with gold and with embroidery; it is so large that it must have sat upon him like the cloak of Hercules upon the shoulders of a dwarf. The priest who had the care of these, showed us at the same time, many of the sacred utensils which were used at the coronation, together with others for the celebration of mass, which had been presented by the emperor, whose virtues he descanted upon, as fluently, as he would have done some time ago upon those of Louis XVI. The churches in France are again frequented, but not as formerly; and many years

must pass away, before the assistance of the government or the contributions of individuals can restore them to their ancient splendour. I was present at Notre Dame, on the day of thanksgiving for the victory of Austerlitz ; and upon this occasion the solemnities of religion were aided by the charms of musick and the pomp of military parade. The different publick bodies, the great magistrates of the empire, and the princes, attended in state, to express their gratitude to heaven for the glory of the empire, and the safety of the emperour. I very much doubt, however, if more than a dozen individuals were sincere in their expressions of satisfaction ; and perhaps not one attached any serious and solemn idea to the festival of the day. It is but twelve years since, a great many of these very people assembled in this very church, to sing hymns in honour of the goddess of Reason, with a sort of sacred musick, and all the mockery of devotion. Robespierre, who had none of those eminent advantages of mind or body, which enabled some distinguished personages of antiquity to enslave their country ; who had neither a commanding figure nor persuasive eloquence, and was not even brave ; had that which supplied the absence of every requisite in the accomplishment of his purposes. He had cunning to affect disinterestedness ; he could talk of virtue, and avail himself of the violence and crimes of others, and yet take the merit, at a proper time, of repressing and punishing them. He would not venture to enter the city as Pisistratus did Athens, with a fictitious deity at his side, but he

permitted Hebert and Chaumette to introduce the goddess of Reason to the convention, and to install her upon the principal altar of Notre Dame. The former archbishop of Paris had already divested himself of his episcopal ornaments before the convention, asserting, that all religion was founded on imposture, and requesting forgiveness for having so long contributed to abuse the credulity of the people. When Chaumette, who had been formerly a schoolmaster, and Hebert, who had been a priest, approached at the head of a procession composed principally of the dregs of the capital, and presented to the representatives of the French nation the object, which, as they said, was alone worthy of adoration ; let men no longer, cried Hebert, tremble at the imaginary thunders of a deity, whom their terrors have created. Let Reason be the only divinity in France ; and behold, the goddess in person offers herself to our adoration ! So saying, he removed a veil from the face of a beautiful woman, properly habited for the occasion. The multitude now shouted, the convention applauded, and the new religion was established. The next step was to celebrate the rites of the goddess ; and that her triumph might be more complete, the scene chosen for the purpose was the cathedral of Notre Dame. The feast given to the people of Paris on that day, was the greatest outrage upon decency, that perhaps ever took place ; it exhibited the reunion of every vice, and was equal to all that the Roman poets have related or invented of the unhallowed rites of Isis or Osiris. The same scandalous scenes, with

inferiour means of celebration indeed, but with all possible profanation, took place at the same time in all the principal cities of the republick. Some young female, distinguished for her personal attractions, and frequently the weeping daughter of parents who had fallen victims to the revolution, saw herself surrounded by the vilest of her sex, and was compelled to perform the principal part upon these occasions;\* while a troop of peasants bore along with every mark of derision, and as sacrifices to be laid upon the altar of Reason, all that had ever been considered as sacred to the purposes of religion by the piety of their ancestors. It was at this same period of the revolution, and while the supposed efforts of France in the cause of liberty, commanded the sympathy and good wishes of so many in America, that these vile scenes were exhibited, and that those devastations were committed, of which the Museum at the Petits Augustins has received the remains.

By far the greater part of the sepulchral and other monuments were mutilated or destroyed, and

\* It is probable that the inventors and promoters of these impious and absurd processions in honour of the goddess of Reason were desirous of imitating the ludicrous ceremonies of the 14th century into which the Saturnalia of the Romans had degenerated. On one occasion a Pontiff or Bishop of Fools, attended by his great officers, and attired in the most ridiculous manner, headed a procession to the Cathedral, where the feast of Fools was celebrated by performing the semblance of church worship amidst gaming, and tumbling, and the grimaces and contortions of buffoons, who personated the inferiour attendants at the celebration of the rites of Religion. The feast of the ass, which without being less profane, was perhaps still more absurd, if possible, seems also to have afforded some hints.

the great body of the people, as if infected by the madness of the government, which had ordered the royal vaults at St. Denis to be opened, and all their ancient kings and princes, all the Valois, and the Bourbons,\* to be thrown promiscuously into one common pit, proceeded to violate all the burial places of the republick, where the remains of persons of rank and fortune had been deposited. The lady who represented the goddess of Reason, was a Mademoiselle Oliva of the opera, the same who had been employed some time before, on account of her resemblance to the queen, to personate that unfortunate princess in the affair of the diamond necklace. I am willing to believe, that she was in both cases the reluctant instrument of some unprincipled men, and that she had performed her part upon the stage of the opera, with infinitely more satisfaction than in either of the two last instances. Like the princess, whose name had been so scandalously abused, she was made to finish her days at the guillotine. Such also was the fate of Hebert and of Chaumette, and of the apostate archbishop. It must have been a striking lesson, to compare the guilty terrors that overwhelmed this wretch, with the smile of serenity with which Madame Roland and the princess of Monaco went to execution.

Adjoining the cathedral is the archiepiscopal palace, where the Cardinal de Retz once fortified

\* See a very interesting account in Chateaubriand's *genie du Christianisme* of the situation in which those bodies were found. Henry IV. had remained entire, so as to be immediately recognized by those who were conversant with pictures and statues of him.



himself against the court, during the regency of Anne of Austria, and whence he marched almost in battle array to the palace of justice, where the Prince of Condè might, as it was supposed, had he been unable to defend himself, have made some attempt upon his person. You will see a well drawn character of this famous Cardinal by Monsieur de la Rochefoucault, in one of Madame de Sevigné's letters; but I know of no book within your reach that can give you a proper idea of the war of the Fronde, which he was chiefly the occasion of. Such a mixture of pleasantry and atrociousness, of songs and assassinations, of epigrams and battles, the world never before saw; and far better would it have been for mankind, if a similar spirit had prevailed during the late revolution. The memoirs of the Cardinal de Retz are less read than they deserve to be; they paint the inclinations and principles of a very extraordinary man, who, without acrimony, hatred, or low-minded jealousy, could lavish his fortune, risk his person, or devote his time, in order to excite a civil war. It was to him a frolick, and an amusement that he was fond of. The conspirators were the only characters he admired in history. He had distinguished himself when a student at the University, by a translation from some Italian author, of the conspiracy of Fiesque, which Robertson has rendered so interesting in his history of Charles V. and was yet a young man, when we find him engaged, by his own account, in a plot to assassinate the Cardinal de Richelieu, whose personal safety, and upon so

solemn an occasion, he ought particularly to have respected ; for the assassination was to have taken place in a church at the termination of divine service, and he was himself then a candidate for holy orders. It ought to be remembered, however, and in some degree to his justification, that he appears to have been rejoiced at the failure of a plot, which he had been ashamed to withdraw from, and that he had done all that was possible to resist the determination of his friends, who had from his infancy intended that he should be a priest. The efforts he made use of for that purpose are not all credible to his morality, but he appears upon two occasions to have been *sans peur et sans reproche* as much as ever the Chevalier Bayard was, and, what is singular in those dissolute and depraved times, to have owed the commencement of his favour at court to the impression which his conduct made upon the mind of the King. Devoting himself at length to the more splendid part of his profession, he became a distinguished preacher, but still remained a libertine in private, amusing himself, as it should seem, at times, by animating the people of Paris to insurrection, and haranguing them as the occasion offered, from the steps of Notre Dame, or the top of a carriage. To be admired, or rather to be wondered at, was the ruling passion of his soul, and it was this, says Rochefoucault, which induced him to retire from the world, when he might still for many years have enjoyed the pleasures of society, and which made him resolve to pay his debts with a scrupulous attention to good faith ; of which, in a man of his rank, there had been

yet no instance. I cannot here deny myself the satisfaction of doing homage to the virtues of a good man, of whose death I have been informed since I began this letter, and whose epitaph might with the utmost propriety be taken from a Latin sentence\* which the Cardinal applied to his own case, on a particular occasion, before the Parliament of Paris, as a quotation from Cicero, but of which he was himself the composer. He had been accused by the keeper of the seals, and not without reason, of throwing every thing into confusion, for the promotion of his own interested views. To have entered into the particulars of a publick justification might have embarrassed him; he did better. I will not condescend, said he, to answer such calumnies; but I will say, for I may say truly, with the Roman orator (and here he applied the words in Latin) that in the worst of times I would not desert the state, in its prosperity I asked nothing for myself, and in its most adverse moments I never lost my hopes. These words, which have infinitely more grace in the original than in the translation I have been able to give of them, might, with the strictest regard to truth, be engraven upon the tomb-stone of General Gadsden, of South Carolina; of whom it may also be said, that having been one of the first to raise the standard of revolt against the oppression of the parent government, he was the first to advise an act of oblivion in favour of those who had differed from him in opinion, and

\* In difficillimis reipublicæ temporibus urbem nunquam deserui, in prosperis nihil de publico delibavi, in desperatis nihil timui.

would never give his consent to any act of confiscation.

The palace of Justice, which is towards the other extremity of the island, was formerly the residence of the Kings of France, and it was here that Charles VI. suffered those indignities, which were repeated at the expense of Louis XVI. in '92. And it is singular with how little deviation, in those wretched times too, as in these last. The populace of Paris appears to have been excited with peculiar ferocity,—not satiated with blood, and deeming, says Hume, the course of justice too dilatory, they broke open the prisons, and put to death all who were confined there. The building has been at different times enlarged and embellished, and now presents a noble facade on an ascent of several steps; in front is a court, which is enclosed by an iron railing, very handsomely finished and decorated, and said to be 130 feet in length. It was here that the parliament of Paris held their sittings, a body resembling the parliament of England only in name, being simply, notwithstanding their pretensions to be something more, a court of justice, divided into different chambers. You will see, if I remember right, a short but accurate account of their history and constitution, in the letters of Lord Chesterfield. Without having any share by right in the legislative authority, the parliament acted as a court of record for the King's edicts; refusing to be governed by those they had not recorded, and frequently refusing to give them that sanction. In that case the King held what was called a bed of justice; he attended the parliament

in person, and ordered the proper officer to register his edict. There were ten of these parliaments throughout the kingdom, and they are accused, those of the distant provinces in particular, of having in many instances exercised a very unjustifiable authority, and of having indulged, I speak of the individual members, in a degree of aristocratick superiority which gave great offence.\* How far that may have been the case I know not, but they certainly provoked their fate by refusing their concurrence to the general land tax, which was proposed by Monsieur de Calonne, by objecting to the liberal and patriotick plans of Turgot, and by urging the King to assemble the states general, which led to the horrors of the revolution, and to those convulsions which have disfigured the face of Europe. Except in cases where the court exerted its influence, and even then in general also, justice was well administered by the parliaments, though the members purchased their places, and transmitted them like any other property to their heirs. It seems contrary to all ideas of propriety, that a man should purchase a right to judge, and that such an office should be hereditary; but purchase gave a degree of independence, not unfavourable to the administration of justice in an absolute monarchy; and those who could foresee their future situation

\* Il ne falloit pas une grande sagacité pour reconnoître dans le Parlement un esprit permanent d'ambition et d'envahissement, un desin perpetuel de sortir des fonctions judiciaires pour les quelles il avoit été institué, et meme de s'immiscer dans les details de l'administration : il s'opposoit aux demandes du Ministre moins par intérêt pour le bien publique, que pour tirer un plus grand parti de son consentement, ou pour renverser ceux qui auroient cru pouvoir s'en passer.

in life with certainty, were not unlikely to qualify themselves for filling it with honour.

There were districts, not within the jurisdiction of any parliament, which had a representative government of their own ; it was so, for instance, in Languedoc. Fenelon had recommended such all over France to his pupil the Duke of Burgundy, and it was one of Mr. Necker's best ideas of reform to have adopted the idea. Had such been the mode of administration at an earlier period, and the French been in the habit of giving the forms of a deliberative\* assembly to every meeting, however trivial the object, or how important, whether to dine together or to build a church, as the English and Americans are, the great body of the representatives when assembled, would not have remained so entirely at the mercy of a few eloquent and designing men, who from habits of publick speaking, and from some knowledge of business, soon rendered themselves masters of the general opinion. The greater part of the members of the various parliaments of the kingdom fell victims to the revolution, and among them Monsieur de Lamoignon, better known by his family name of Malesherbes. He had filled with distinguished reputation the highest

\* Monsieur de Clermont Tonnerre devoit plutot à l'art, qu'à la nature le talent de la parole : il avoit acquis cette aisance dans les assemblees de Francs Macons, qu'il frequentoit tres assidument, et sans doute dans ce dessein. En parlant devant un grand nombre de personnes on se guerit necessairement de cette inexplicable timidité qui nous prive tout à coup de la memoire et des autres facultes de l'Esprit.

Souvenirs et Portraits du Duc de Levis.

It was observed with great wit by Mr. Burke, one of the judges of S. Carolina, that the French might be said to have taken liberty the natural way, as people catch the Small Pox, and to have suffered accordingly.

judicial office, proving himself upon all occasions the strenuous opposer of partial taxes, and of every infringement on the rights of the subject. Having insisted upon retiring from the administration of affairs, at the dismissal of his friend and fellow-labourer Turgot, he had lived long in retirement, and more particularly so, since the commencement of the revolution, until he was informed that it was intended to bring the King to trial; but though upwards of eighty years of age, he would not, as he expresses himself in his letter to the president of the convention, he would not desert the King in the hour of distress, for he had shared in his prosperity. Posterity will to the end of time honour the memory of Malesherbes,\* and will see with horror how useless his generous offer was to the King, and how fatal to himself. The chamber of vacations, which was in the nature of a committee of the parliament during its recess, having some time before signed a protest against the measures of the national assembly, an act of amnesty had been passed for this and every offence of the sort, but the paper containing the protest was known to be at the house of Monsieur de Malesherbes in the country, where he had returned

\* Quels furent les motifs, demandera-t-on, de cette courageuse détermination? une pieuse fidélité envers un Souverain dechu sans être dégradé, une noble pitié pour le malheur. J'ai vu plusieurs fois cet illustre Viellard, and je me rappelle sa figure ouverte et calme, et son air un peu distrait. Ses principes étoient sévères, et sa société douce. Magistrat intègre, Père tendre, Ami sèlè, il jouissoit de l'estime générale, et de la bienveillance universelle. Tout dans sa vie publique et privée avoit été bon et honorable, mais l'éclat extraordinaire que jeta la fin de sa carrière a placé tout le reste de sa vie dans l'ombre, et l'imagination ne s'y arrête pas.

Souvenirs et Portraits du duc de Levis.

after the death of the King, and lived remote from the world, with his children and grandchildren. It was pretended also, that an emigrant had been concealed by some of the family ; and it was upon these pretexts that the venerable magistrate was dragged to execution, after the mockery of a trial, together with his sister, his daughter and her husband, and the husband of his grand-daughter. One might have supposed that the sight of Malesherbes, so long the love and veneration of all ranks and orders, exposed upon the scaffold in the midst of his family, would have excited in the breast of every spectator, an emotion, that no guards or bayonets could have resisted. But the people of France, of late so ferocious and ungovernable, seemed now in a state of torpid insensibility. They quietly submitted to see upwards of 90 persons a day conveyed to the guillotine, and would have submitted to see the daily number of victims increased to 150, which it was intended should be the case, if Robespierre had not been cut off. Fortunately for France, the monster who might with impunity have continued to destroy all that was venerable and respectable, all that was distinguished, or noble, or rich in the republick, began to throw out hints against certain committees, and manifest dissatisfaction with Tallien and others, so long the instruments of his cruelty. He was even supposed to have placed them upon his list, which was known to be the list of death. A party was now formed, strong enough for his destruction ; and the very assembly which, a few weeks before, had ordered a



day of thanksgiving throughout the republick to the Supreme Being, so lately acknowledged, for the safety of Robespierre, were at present as unanimous in declaring him a publick enemy. Domitian was himself cut off, says Juvenal, as soon as he became dangerous to the outcasts of society.

I have often rejoiced that my excursion to France had not been made at an earlier period, at any period indeed between the death of the king and the power of the directory. There are circumstances now, that I could wish otherwise; but the laws appear to be fairly administered between man and man; a ferocious officer of the police but rarely breaks in upon the rest of a private family; humanity is not insulted by the daily exhibition of numbers carried to execution; there is some semblance of religion, and an individual, who resolutely avoids all interference with politics, except what the Moniteur puts him in possession of, pursues his object, be it pleasure, or business, or science, with as little fear of being molested as under the old government. The Emperour too, for justice is due to all men, gains not a little upon being compared to the tyrants of '93 and '94, or to the profligate directory which preceded him. Had I arrived in France at any time during the period above-mentioned, I should have found the provincial towns groaning under the tyranny of a proconsul, who was sometimes an apostate priest, sometimes a dissolute runaway attorney's clerk, glorying in one continued insult to every idea of decency and morality; I should have seen the produce of

the farmer under requisition, and met waggon loads of prisoners, of all ages and sexes, going under an escort to Paris, which, like the lion's den in the fable, admitted of no return ; I should have seen the crosses overturned, the churches converted into stables, and whole districts labouring to appearance under the peculiar malediction of Providence. Nor would the general appearance of Paris have been such as to afford one any consolation. The parts of the city formerly occupied by the favourites of fortune and the court, were deserted, and the words *national property* in large characters over the door of many a hotel, explained the fate of the former proprietor, and the situation of his family. The law of the maximum, which fixed the price in assignats of every article in common use, rendered the approach of a customer frightful to a shopkeeper, who did not dare to decline selling ; while the peasantry of the neighbourhood, who had been in the practice of supplying the markets, who continued to do so from fear alone, approached the halles with regret visible upon their countenances. Hardly a carriage was heard in the day, and if heard in the night, it was generally known to be employed in transferring prisoners to the Conciergerie. The noise and tumult of former times had been troublesome, but the tranquillity of the present times was frightful ; it was the silence of death. The few individuals who walked the streets, avoided all intercourse with each other, as in the time of some infectious disorder, and hurried along in a certain squalidness of dress, in imitation of their

rulers. This, which served the purposes of disguise to many, was supposed by others to be connected with the principles of liberty, and has been adopted in time by the unthinking part of the community in some distant countries, where liberty ought to have been better known; while all affected a certain coarseness of speech and rudeness of behaviour which were alike hostile to the feelings of decency and the cause of humanity. In the midst of all this ferocity and these horrors, the means of dissipation were abundant. Between twenty and thirty theatres were opened every night, and, as the government defrayed the greater part of the expense, the prices of admission were so low, that many found it answer the purposes of economy to pass the evening at a playhouse. The pieces exhibited were such as became the character and conduct of those, under whom all trembled. No actor would have ventured to perform the part of a king, who was not an odious tyrant, or have pronounced a hemistich, which might seem to reflect upon the administration. A priest in his sacerdotal dress, contriving the plan of a general massacre, or the death of Marat, were subjects for tragedy; and a young man getting disguised into a convent of nuns, was the ground-work of a favourite comedy. I have conversed with many who were in Paris at this period, and who felt for the degradation of a great nation; but there were others, who having procured assignats for specie, enjoyed the opportunity afforded them of being luxurious at so small an expense, and who felt happy in the possession of

a magnificent hotel, the owner of which might have been pining in a dungeon, or wandering with his children in quest of bread. To such men, France was even then a delightful country; they rioted in all which had ever excited their sensuality, and returned satiated at last, and as if loaded with the spoils of a conquered country, to astonish their simple neighbours with a display of handsome plate and gorgeous furniture. To know the virtues and amiable manners of the French nation at the time I speak of, a traveller must have visited the prisons, many of which containing persons from every station in life, bore the appearance of a well-regulated commonwealth. The rich divided their means of existence with the poor, children came voluntarily to share the danger of their parents; wives and sisters softened the captivity, and partook of the hard fortune of their husbands and brothers; and the old and faithful servants of a family were seen to continue their attendance to the last, and follow their benefactors to the scaffold. In this reunion of unfortunate persons were then alone to be found those ancient magistrates, the luminaries of the nation in its better days, who had so bravely stood between the crown and the people; the greatly rich, who like Lavoisier, devoted thousands to the improvement of useful sciences, or like Labordes, made the rays of bounty shine upon all about them, and there alone were still to be admired those graces of polished conversation, those amiable manners, which can so well express the virtues of social life.\*

\* See letter LXX, and the quotation from Mad. de Stael.

The active courage of the nation seemed confined to the frontiers. At home the only proof of resolution was to suffer without complaint, and submit to death with equanimity. We are all eighty years of age, was the common expression. I have seen, says Riouffe, forty-five members of the parliament of Paris, and thirty-three of that of Toulouse, march to death with the same air and demeanour which distinguished them in former times, when walking in procession on the day of some publick ceremony.

I had very little idea, when I began this letter, of deviating so widely from what, I intended, should be the principal subject of it ; but the mention of the parliament of Paris has led me insensibly from my purpose. Let me, however, mention one case more, which marks the worst times of the revolution, and may console you for all the useless horrors I have related with an instance of parental love, which cannot be too often applauded. A father and a son, of the name of Loiserolle, were confined at St. Lazare, where the committee of publick safety chose to lay the scene of one of those imaginary conspiracies, which enabled them at any time to get rid of a number of prisoners at once. The son, who had been placed upon the list of conspirators, happened not to be in the common room ; he had retired to rest in an adjoining chamber, when the nightly demand was made for the accustomed waggon load of victims to be transferred to the Conciergerie, which was known to be the threshold of death. Loiserolle was now order-

ed to advance. Here, said the noble-minded father; and requesting in a whisper, that no one would disturb his son, or inform the officers of the police of their mistake, he took his place with others in a square formed by the guards, appeared at the bar of the tribunal the next morning, answered to his name, which was the only question asked, and bravely died in his son's place. I hope in God some poet or historian, worthy to record such magnanimous actions, will rise up hereafter. It pleased Heaven that this should be the last instance of cruelty perpetrated by the jacobin government; their fall took place a few days afterwards; and Robespierre, after undergoing a degree of agonizing pain, which seems to have in some measure vindicated the justice of Providence, died at the guillotine.\*

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## LETTER LXVII.

MY DEAR E——,

If ever I should have the pleasure of reading these letters over with you, we will spread a map of Paris upon the table, and go on from street to street together, and let me exhort you in the mean-

\* Such was the fatal tendency of every measure at this period, that even this meritorious act of justice was accompanied by an act of cruelty. Robespierre had always lodged at the house of a joiner, to whose daughter he was partial, and this young woman, together with her parents, was dragged to execution at the same time.

time, to do so as far as your patience will let you, and to trace the course, and find out the places I describe, if you wish me to believe that I have afforded you any amusement. A line drawn from the Rue St. Jaques, at right angles through the Sorbonne, would soon strike the Rue de la Harpe, where some remains of the Roman domination in Paris, may still be traced. They consist of what was probably a large hall and made part of a building, which has long since disappeared, but is supposed to have been the place of residence of Julian, who was extremely attached to Paris for qualities very different from those which characterize its present inhabitants. It was afterwards a sort of state prison, and it was there that Lewis Le Debonnaire confined his sisters. Their irregular conduct may have been deserving of censure, but the severity of the pious Emperour was ill advised, and of no avail ; it in no degree amended the manners of these frail ladies, while it exposed him to the enmity of their numerous admirers. There are still a great many things worth describing on the south side of the river, but I shall either refer you to books or speak of them hereafter, and will now return to the ancient Convent of the Carmelites, at the upper end of the Rue St. Jaques, in order to give you some account of the establishment for the instruction of the deaf and dumb, whom you must hereafter permit me to call the *Sourd-muets*. I do not like a mixture of the two languages, but the French appellation in this instance is certainly the most convenient. I perceived by the Encyclopedia,

that great and successful efforts were made, even before the commencement of the last century, to instruct such unfortunate persons as were born deaf and dumb ; but if we are to suppose, and I think we may, that the Abbe de l'Epee was informed of all that was done before his time, and of the method pursued, the progress made was very small indeed in comparison of what has been since effected. The utmost that the scholars of the Abbe de l'Epee attained to, was the knowledge of some sign by which they could express any word ; and of the art of writing down the word required when the sign was made by a person skilled in their mute language ; some short and trivial questions too they could answer in writing, because the same questions had been repeatedly made ; but they were far from being able to compose, or to express their ideas on the most common subjects. They were somewhat in the situation of a schoolboy, whose knowledge of Latin is confined to the Vocabulary, or of a Chinese youth, who may have consumed several years of his life in learning to write down a great variety of characters, which are the words of their language, for each of which he can give a name without being able to affix the most distant idea to any one of them. “ Do not flatter yourself, my friend, says the Abbe de l'Epee in a letter to the Abbe Sicard, do not flatter yourself, that your scholars will ever be able to express themselves properly in writing. If they can learn to translate our written language into their language of signs, they will have attained what we do, with respect to



foreign languages, when we learn to translate them into our own without being in any degree capable of expressing ourselves or composing in the original. It is enough if you can dictate a sentence to them by signs, and let them have signs, if you please, that may represent phrases, but nothing more will you ever attain to."—It would appear from this that the satisfaction of the numerous spectators, who at different times attended the Abbe de l'Epee's exhibitions, was in great measure founded upon delusion, the good man was himself deluded by his benevolent enthusiasm; he had done wonders in bringing up his scholars to all that he supposed possible, but they were as far from understanding what they wrote, as the automaton who plays at chess is from knowing the nature of the game.\* The consequence of this delusion was a

\* There have been instances of persons who have been deaf from their birth and consequently dumb, and after they have arrived to adult or middle age, have been able to hear and speak. And though before this they attended publick worship with others, and appeared very devout, and often made those signs which those, with whom they conversed in this way, thought were expressions of their belief, of the being of God and of their piety, yet when they came to hear and speak, they declared, that they never had a thought that there was a God, until they could hear, and were by that means informed; and there never has been an instance known of any such person declaring, that he had any belief or thought of the existence of a God, before he could hear and speak. Dr. Willot, in his sermon on the light of nature, relates a story of a man in France who was deaf and dumb, yet was very knowing, active, and faithful in the common affairs of life. And, upon solemn trial before the Bishop, by the help of those who could converse with him, was judged to be a very knowing and devout Christian, and admitted to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which he attended for many years with all the signs of high devotion, such as elevation of hands, eyes, &c. At length a chirurgical operation was performed up-

severe disappointment to such parents as had sent their children to the Abbe de l'Epee, and had learned wonders of the publick exhibitions. A simple yes or no was all they could obtain on paper in answer to any question, and though the memory and handwriting had been formed and cultivated, it was found that their reasoning faculties were still extremely confined, and their powers of expression very limited. I, said the Abbe de l'Epee, have provided glass, addressing himself to the Abbe Sicard, and you may have the glory of converting it into spectacles and telescopes. This, if we may adopt the metaphor, is precisely what the Abbe Sicard has done; he has gone from the point at which his predecessor stopped, and has invented and explained a method of rendering the faculties of the *sourd-muets*, which had been awakened only, equal to the acquisition of every kind of knowledge. A more arduous, a more benevolent, a more successful attempt was never made for the good of an unfortunate portion of mankind, and in order that his method might become more generally useful, he has taken pains to explain it. Any person may become acquainted with it by looking over the Abbe's grammar, and he may convince himself of the success it has been attended with, by going to the house of the institu-

on his ears, on which he became capable of hearing, and a little while after, could both speak and read. He then declared, that while he was deaf he had no idea of a God, or maker of the world, or of a future state, and that all he had then done, in matter of religion, was purely in imitation of others.

This note was given me by the Rev. Mr. Patten of Newport.

tion, either on publick days or in private. A great variety of signs form the primitive medium of instruction, and when one considers, that being drawn from nature, they would, with a little practice, be equally intelligible to people of all nations; they might be made perhaps to realise the dream of a universal language, which has amused the imagination of some ingenious philosophers. Nor would such a language want force, for in addition to what is called talking on the fingers, there is an infinite variety of *gests*, and there is the expression of the countenance. I am just as well satisfied, I confess, and it is right I should be, at my time of life, to continue the use of words in my intercourse with mankind, but I am convinced that there is upon some occasions a silence which speaks, and an eloquence of looks superiour to every other. "Drink to me only with their eyes," is a very pretty expression of Ben Jonson's, and Milton paints grace, innocence, and love, not in the words, but in the steps and gestures of our first mother. Nothing which can be said of the Abbe Sicard's ingenuity and zeal, will appear exaggerated, to those who will for a moment consider the difficulties he had to encounter, and the end he had in view, and the success which has crowned his efforts. It was singularly fortunate that so useful a life should have been preserved at a period which was so fatal to many pious and worthy individuals. He had been imprisoned with other priests in the year 1793; his pupils immediately applied to the humanity of the legislative assembly, in favour of *him* to whom they

owed their moral existence. A fruitless recommendation, however, to the executive council, was the only result of this affecting application, and the Abbe Sicard would have shared the fate of his brethren on the 2d of September, had it not been for the courage and sensibility of a man whose name deserves to be known in every part of the world. A watch-maker, of the name of Monnot, forcing his way through the crowd of murderers, embraced the intended victim of their savage fury, and implored the mercy of all present for the Abbe Sicard, for the father of the deaf and dumb, for the friend of those whom Providence had deserted. There is an eloquence which has nothing to do with art, and which nothing can resist; the wretches who affected to officiate as judges upon this horrible occasion, seemed to relent, and the mob without, who were almost as ready to spare as to murder, expressed their approbation with loud applauses, and with every mark of respect, made room for the prisoner and his preserver. Those who would appreciate the Abbe's services, should consider how different the *Sourd-muet* is from other children. The cares and caresses of a mother are, in great measure, lost upon him, nor can he take any part in those early sports of childhood, which exercise the body and form the mind. With a degree of instinct inferiour to that of many brutes, without the means of communication with his fellow creatures, without a form under which he can class his ideas, or signs of recollection by which he may recall them, the impressions made upon his mind must be fugitive and transitory. He is a single, a solitary being, who

may be deterred from an improper act by violence and punishment, but who cannot possibly otherwise form the slightest conception of what is right. He beholds the objects which surround him, but without any comprehension of their nature and qualities, further than as they affect the sensations of the moment; he is selfish, impetuous, and greedy of enjoyment, and can be under no restraint from sentiments of morality, for to him morality exists not. Such is the deplorable situation from which the human mind is to be liberated, before man can be taught to fill even the most inferior offices of society, and we may easily conceive how the difficulty increases, when he is to be made to understand the various connexions which unite men to one another, and the sacredness of property, and the rights which God and nature have given him, and the duties which he is called upon to fulfil. We have no idea perhaps from our having been always in the use of our eyes and ears, how much of our education is acquired without any particular tuition; how much our minds and manners are formed from our intercourse with the world by means of the involuntary use of these organs, and from the earliest period of our lives; the progress is so gradual as to be insensible to ourselves, and if at the age of fourteen, a young person in the full, though as yet unexercised, possession of his faculties, was to set about learning all which was necessary in order to place himself on a footing of equality with others of his age, the labour would seem immense. But how great must the labour be,

and how are we to qualify those exertions, which can convert the deaf and dumb human animal of fourteen into an enlightened, well informed man, a man of letters, perfectly well acquainted with his moral duties, and filling a useful station in society ! Surely if Elviou, drawing money from every passing Parisian by the charms of his voice, could be compared to Amphion, you will see no exaggeration in my likening the Abbe Sicard to Prometheus, who stole the sacred fire from heaven, and animated a statue. The book of the Abbe's, which I have alluded to, and from which I have been able to receive some knowledge of his *system* and mode of proceeding, would be useful in any plan of education whatsoever. To give you a correct idea of it would probably exceed my power of analysing, nor would the extract be much shorter than the book itself, but the outlines may be rapidly traced and easily comprehended. Several objects, which we are all accustomed to the use of, are placed upon a table, and these the *Sourd-muet* is made to compare to a drawing taken of each ; he is soon able to point out the resemblance and learns either to fetch the object on seeing the representation, or to attempt a resemblance of it in drawing, on seeing the object. He also connects with each certain sign or *gest* ; these this teacher adopts, and as the number of objects is increased, his means of expression are also rapidly enlarged ; he is now in possession of a sort of language, and he finds himself no longer a solitary being among men ; the next step is to write the name over or along the representations of an object,

and then, effacing this last, to leave only the name. He now discovers that this new mode of drawing, in which there is indeed no external resemblance, is yet invariably made use of to convey the idea of certain articles, that a passing stranger would give him the article on being shown the word (as he soon learns that this new mode of drawing is called) or write the word on being shown the article, and after some difficulty he adopts it as being more correct and expeditious, and more generally understood; care is taken to show him, that the constituent parts of every word, are from a collection of twenty-four forms called letters, which mean nothing separately, but which always express the same thing upon their being put together in a certain manner. Such is the commencement which the Abbe Sicard recommends, from having employed it with the utmost success in the case of Massieu, whom in a state of total deafness, he took from minding sheep, at the age of fourteen, and who now at the age of thirty-five is well acquainted with the belles lettres of his own and of the English language, reads the Latin and Greek authors, and is I am told a skillful mathematician. Having learned to read and write the names of a great variety of objects, Massieu easily learned to class them, and as he walked out a great deal into the fields, and was carried to various manufactories and workshops of different artists, his vocabulary was very rapidly increasing; he now knew a number not only of simple, but of compound appellations, and these he could write down if required; but he was soon

more desirous of acquiring knowledge than of showing it, his mind already began to analyse, and his time was already become valuable. The elements of grammar kept pace with his other acquirements, and while he learned to distinguish that which merely *is*, from that which *lives*, and the *quality* from the *substance*, he also learned the value of the various parts of speech, and the government of verbs and the use of pronouns, by means of applications made to his sense of sight. He was next to take a most important step ; he was to be made to comprehend that he had faculties which he had already exercised indeed, but without attending to their nature, and far superiour to those of the body by which they are called into action ; that upon discontinuing the use of his eyes for a moment, he could still see internally, that we could, in other words, consider ; that an idea springing up in the mind at the sight of an object, leads to the memory of other objects not then visible, and to an internal action, which he learned was called reflection ; and that a simple inclination becomes, by a mental operation, desire, and then passion. He easily comprehended that the effect of light upon the visual nerves, as of bodies upon the touch, might have a mechanical operation upon the brain or seat of sensation, but the intellectual consequences that arise from this operation, the powers of calling these up at pleasure, and passing them in review, must, as he was made to understand, arise from some cause within us, which had, as he felt, no material existence. Causes and effects he had always seen



connected ; this great, this wonderful effect then, this immaterial power must spring from some great, some wonderful, some immaterial cause, and that could be no other than God. We may conceive the good man's delight at being able to convey such instructions to the minds of his pupils, to open to them this prospect of another state of existence, and to afford them another powerful incentive to the practice of virtue. The subsequent questions that naturally follow a belief in the existence of God, are also treated of and explained ; but for these I must refer you to the book itself. I am persuaded that the method pursued by the Abbe Sicard with the deaf and dumb, would be a good one to adopt towards children in the full enjoyment of their faculties, for they never learn any thing so well, as when they seem to find out and to invent that by themselves which we are desirous they should be made acquainted with. I have never been able to procure any account of the mode of teaching the deaf and dumb in other parts of Europe, but I presume it has kept pace with the improvements of the Abbe Sicard many of whose scholars would, from the facility with which they comprehend, the readiness with which they answer in their way, and the correctness of their information, do credit to their instructor, had they enjoyed the use of all their faculties. In addition to the language of signs and *gests*, they are attentive to the motion of the lips, and not only learn to distinguish words and sentences in that manner, but also by applying their fingers in the dark, to the mouth of the

person speaking. That wonderful machine, the human hand, which serves as an eye to the blind, serves in this instance as an ear to the deaf and dumb. I have explained to you in a former letter how the blind are taught to write sentences so as to be read by others who are also blind, and the same mode of communication has been practised with success between them and the deaf and dumb, two sorts of human creatures between whom Providence had placed, what might have seemed, an insurmountable barrier. They have, I was told, something like an antipathy to each other, and the children of the two schools would be always quarrelling in their way, if permitted to intermix. They feel perhaps, that neither class is at the head of the human scale, and are doubtful about precedence. We should be, I think, extremely embarrassed to choose between the two situations, if it were possible that we could be called upon to decide, and to say whether we had rather be deaf and dumb, or blind; these last have great advantages in the facility with which they may acquire knowledge, but are much more dependent in common life, and infinitely more circumscribed in the choice of a profession or a trade; their external appearance too is against them; they are extremely awkward in their gait and gestures, and betray in every motion almost the want of the sense they are deprived of. The deaf and dumb, on the contrary, know the value of a good appearance, and live so much in the constant exercise of their hands and arms, as to become

graceful in the use of them, their eye too is all quickness and penetration, it is the eye of a poet or a painter, and illumines their countenance. They have, besides, the inestimable advantage of reading for amusement. Their mode of conversing by signs and gestures is limited indeed, but less so than you would imagine, and they have a method of aerial writing like the Chinese, who are accustomed, when the sense of a word they make use of is doubtful, to draw the root or character of it in the air with the finger. The *Sourd-muets* trace words in the same manner far more rapidly than we do with a pen, those to whom they address themselves, being in the habit of reading backwards, as the blind do with their fingers.

Permit me here for a moment to wander from the *Sourds-muets* of Paris to our Western Indians, who very frequently, it seems, accompany their words in conversation with some sign as the Chinese do; these last making use of their written language, a language entirely different from the one they speak, for that purpose, and the Indians of those signs which form the mode of communication among the tribes, who wander over the immense country, which spreads between the Mississippi and the Pacifick Ocean. Mr. Dunbar, from whose letters to Mr. Jefferson I first learnt this circumstance, has given some instances of the sign used by the Chinese, being precisely the same with that used by the Indians, and seems desirous of founding an hypothesis upon this fact,

which would account, he thinks, for the peopling of our Continent. But laying the object of his hypothesis out of sight, it is easy to convince ourselves, that the resemblance arises from both nations having derived their impressions in the first instance from the wants and passions of man, and from those objects, which must first and most powerfully attract his attention. The improvements of civilized society have in time operated a difference, the Chinese sign bearing in many cases but a distant allusion to its original, whilst that of the Indian is still the unimproved expression of simple nature. That such is the case, that the Indian language of signs, whether like the Chinese written language or not, is derived from nature, may be proved, if it require proof, by its striking similarity in many instances to the signs of the Sourds-muets. My authority for this last assertion is the best that can be, it is that of Massieu himself, who has translated Mr. Dunbar's letter into French, and accompanied it with many interesting observations. The Indian signs for rain, a cloud, to carry, to bring, to come; for a stone, for the pronoun I, for the sun and moon, for the night, for the negative, for the human body, for a thing's being finished, and for the adverb immediately, are the same with those of the Sourds-muets. It may be easily conceived, what a treasure this letter of Mr. Dunbar's was for Massieu, who of all men perhaps is the most learned in the language of signs. He appears to have been delighted with the approximation of

these children of nature to himself and brethren, he admires the mute eloquence of many of their modes of expression, and is particularly struck with their signs descriptive of a wild animal; how inferiour, says he, is the expression of *bete fauve*, or *wild beast*, to that elevation of the hand, which expresses the pointed ear of an animal catching every sound in the breeze, and to that hasty emission of the breath, so emblematick of extreme rapidity.

The misfortune of the Abbe Sicard had not finished with his escape from the murderers of the 2d of September; he had been once more arrested and then enlarged, and after two years of distress, was again a third time imprisoned, and on the point of being separated forever from his pupils. The intention was, it appears, to send him at a proper opportunity to Cayenne, and it was during the long and tedious hours of confinement, and of cruel suspense, that he composed his course of instruction for the deaf and dumb, of which I have endeavoured to give you some idea. A change of measures, however, took place, he was released, and had his property restored to him. He is now assisted and patronized by the government, and the most rigid Carmelite, (if any yet remain of those pious sisters) will not think her convent profaned by the residence of such a man, or by the use it is put to. Massieu whom I have mentioned to you, who is the wonder of the Abbe's school, has published an account of himself. It is a history of his feelings, and if we

may suppose (as I presume we may) that he never deceives himself and mistakes imagination for memory, it is one of the most interesting compositions that exist, and adds a valuable chapter to the history of mankind. His ideas of right and wrong were taught him, he says, by his father's applauses, and by a cane, which stood in the corner of the room. From seeing the family at times on their knees, with uplifted hands, he had conceived there was something greater beyond the clouds, and this it was, he supposed, that descended at night and drew towards it the plants and grains which were committed to the earth. Animals he thought, were produced, and grew like plants. He perceived that other boys were in possession of some faculty that he had not, and thought that it might be acquired at school, where they regularly assembled, but he found (and it made him weep) that he gained nothing by going there. He learned to count ten in taking care of his sheep, and would then notch down one upon his staff, and begin counting another ten, but that was the extent of his acquirements. When first brought to Bourdeaux, he was every day in expectation of seeing the new flock he was to take care of, and fearful in the mean-time of some evil intention in those about him, and of some mischief in every motion, and was trying to get back to his sheep again, when the Abbe Sicard commenced his education. It must seem almost incredible to you, that this poor lad should have so rapidly become what I have described him,

and that he should astonish the audience, as he frequently does at the exhibitions of the Abbe Sicard, by answers to such questions as people frequently come prepared to make him. What is eternity? It is a day without yesterday, or tomorrow; It is a never-ending time of which we know not the beginning. What is a revolution? It is a tree, the roots of which have shot up in place of the stem. What is gratitude? It is the memory of the heart. Such are the answers which Massieu gives, nor would it be easy to give better, or express them more happily.

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## LETTER LXVIII.

MY DEAR E——,

It was impossible to confine what I had to say of the deaf and dumb to one letter; and if I have been able, in any degree, to communicate what I feel with respect to this highly useful institution, you will scarcely regret that I could not. I twice attended the monthly exhibitions, of which I will give you an account presently, and had some conversation with the Abbe Sicard; and I once had the pleasure of passing some time in a room where an assistant of the Abbe was giving lessons. On my arrival at the Carmelites, upon this last occasion, I asked a little boy, who was going out, to shew me the school room, upon which he applied his fingers to his mouth and to

his ears, to explain to me that he was deaf and dumb, and then imitated the action of a person taking a pencil out of his pocket, and writing on a piece of paper. All this was done in less time than words expressive of the same ideas could have been pronounced, and with a very intelligent countenance, and upon my writing down, that I was an American, and that I wished to see a countryman, a *sourd-muet* who had lately arrived, he conducted me to the room. I could perceive, as he went along the corridor of the ancient convent, that he told the boys we met, who I was, with his fingers; several of them appeared to be conversing, and all of them seemed cheerful and happy. As I requested the instructor to continue his lesson, I had the pleasure to see the mode of teaching, which the Abbe recommends, put in practice. A part of the wainscot was painted black, and upon this, the boys either drew the figures of different objects, or placed the names of them, or wrote sentences which the master dictated. Some of them were learning the numerical figures, by making a greater or less number of radii meet in a common centre, where the figures were placed; and others, the government of a verb, by one or more substantives; in the case of the third person singular, for instance,\* of the verb *to go*, and in the present

\* The two senses of the sight and of the touch are thus made to obviate the great deficiency of speech, and the want of the sense of hearing is very much alleviated by enabling the *Sourd-muets* to receive an amusement from books. They are thus qualified to be use-



time, *he* was put at one extremity of a line and *goes* at the other; and in the third person plural, two lines, each having *he* at one extremity, terminated by forming an acute angle, and there the words *they go* were written. It was the same for the first person plural of *to be*: two lines, with *I am* at the commencement of each, ended in *we are*. I desired the instructor to dictate to one of them, that I was from North America, which he did by pointing to the west with one hand, and with a gesture which implied distance, and making a movement with the other in imitation of a ship in motion. He comes from America, was instantly written down, and the boys immediately gathered about me and drew my attention to a little Creole of St. Domingo, implying, I presume, that he was my countryman. I then requested that the word North might be put before America, upon which the instructor, making a sign that all was not right, looked first as if incommoded by the sun, then turned suddenly round and pointed a little to the right of West, and the word North was immediately added. I observed that they expressed the future by moving the hand forward in a half circle vertically, and the past by an action which resembled the throwing of something over the shoulder. I am sorry I neglected to ask how many pupils there are at present under the care of the Abbe Sicard, but I know the number to be very considerable. Persons who are able to bear

ful to themselves and others, and the treasures of salvation are brought within their reach.—HOLEY.

the expense, pay for the board and tuition of their children, the others are maintained by the government. I should have been glad to have repeated my visit to this interesting place, but there were still a great many things to be seen in Paris, and my time has passed as rapidly as in a dream.

A great many of Massieu's definitions are the best I know, and I was only sorry, that a person of his respectable character and great acquirements should be called upon to act a part, once a month, upon a sort of publick stage. As he expresses himself by looks, and by gesticulations, and motions of the body, there are times when it is impossible to keep one's countenance. But the good Abbe condescends to act a part also, and takes a great deal of pains to explain his system before persons, who pay very little attention to what he says, and are far from following him, as he imagines, into the regions of metaphysicks. They come to see the *sourd-muets* perform feats of knowledge, as they would go to see a monkey play tricks, and are impatient till the show begins.

There is a simplicity in the language of these people, when they express themselves upon paper, which is very interesting. It happened once to Massieu to have his pocket picked, and his attestation before the magistrate was as follows. "I am a *sourd-muet*. I was standing with others, *sourd-muets* like myself, looking at the pyx of the holy Sacrament, when a man perceived a red pocket-book in my right coat pocket. He approached me gently and took it. My hip informed me of

what had happened. I turned towards him: he was frightened, and threw the pocket-book against the leg of another man, who picked it up and gave it to me. I took him by the coat; he turned pale and trembled. I beckoned to a soldier and showed him the pocket-book. The soldier brings this man-robber before you, and I have followed. I swear before God he took my pocket-book. He dares not swear before God. I hope he will not have his head cut off, but only be made to row upon the sea, for he has not killed."

The first effusions of his mind, when his teacher had made him feel the necessity of a Supreme Being, and convinced his reason that there was a God, were truly astonishing. He begged that he might return home and give the blessed information to his parents, and to his brothers and sisters; and when he was informed that the government had decreed him twelve hundred livres a year, as an assistant teacher; "ah, how happy I am!" was his exclamation, "my dear parents now can never want bread."

The almost impious idea of Rousseau, that he would present himself to his creator, at the day of universal judgment, with the volume of his confessions in his hand, might cease to deserve that epithet, if applied to these good and virtuous men, the Abbe de l'Epee and the Abbe Sicard. They, surely, if we can suppose such a moment according to the literal interpretation, might not fear to present themselves at the most awful tri-

bunal, followed by numbers, for whom neither virtue nor religion had existed, but for their exertions.

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## LETTER LXIX.

MY DEAR E —,

My accounts of the deaf and dumb have taken up so much room that I feel it necessary to be more concise for the future. After soliciting your attention so frequently, it would be wrong to abuse your patience, and yet if it were my object to give you an exact idea of Paris, and if I were equal to it, a great deal would remain to be said. My determination, from the first, was only to speak of what I saw, and then only when I imagined that the ideas which occurred to me might be, in some respects, different from what you might meet with in books of travels. The hospitals alone could furnish a subject for more than one letter. The religious women of various denominations, some of which would sound strange to English ears, (see let. LXIV.) who had devoted themselves by vows to attend at these last retreats of human misery, continued to do so during the revolution, notwithstanding the indignities they were exposed to, and the hardships they were made to undergo; and the danger they incurred of death or exile. They are the only persons of the sort who wear the habit of their order in pub-

lick, and if it be a gratification to their honest pride to be so distinguished, they surely deserve it.

Independent of those who take refuge in hospitals, there is in Paris, as there always will be in all great towns, a number of poor, not so reduced as to consent to the same wretched resource, and who yet stand in need of some assistance. For their relief there exists in every section a *conseil de bienfaisance*, who call upon the inhabitants for subscriptions, which are, however, entirely voluntary, and there are also small sums granted from time to time for that purpose by the government.

Convents are not known in law, but there is no legal impediment to any assemblage of persons who may choose to call themselves by a certain name. A pious and wealthy lady has lately purchased the house and garden of the Carmes,\* where the massacre took place in 1793, and has assembled as many Carmelites as she could hear of; to these several young women and others advanced in life have joined themselves, and the community, conforming to the regulations of the order as it once existed, pass their days here under the direction of their benefactress, in a state of voluntary seclusion. If any religious order of men be

\* The order of Carmes was founded in times of the most remote antiquity. Pythagoras, it was pretended, and afterwards some of the immediate descendants of the Apostles were of it. The female branches of the order were called Carmelites; they were extremely rigid in their observances—the Lady alluded to in the text could not reassemble them in the principal Convent at Paris, as it had been given up for the residence of the deaf and dumb.

reestablished it will be that of the Jesuits, who have once or twice nearly attained their end. The emperor, who is not apt to be irresolute, has shown himself so upon this occasion. It is certain that the publick education in France has suffered extremely since their order was abolished, and the events of the revolution have manifested that they were in the right, when they predicted a succession of evil consequences from the effects of what was called philosophy. D'Alembert himself, and even Voltaire, would acknowledge as much if they were now alive.

I shall say nothing to you of the observatory, where I saw a very large telescope, made after the manner of Herschel's, of which you will find a good account in the Encyclopedia. There is a descent hence into the ancient quarries which extend under a part of the town, and of which the inhabitants are either ignorant, or give themselves no trouble about, though different authors, and Mercier in particular, have endeavoured to excite their fears. The idea of an immense cavity under a populous part of the city has something terrible to the imagination, and there have been periods during the revolution when the conduct of this very part of Paris was so atrocious as to have merited that it had served as an instrument in the hands of Providence for their destruction. I might have visited several extensive libraries, but I could never conceive the inducement that led travellers to such places. It is a satisfaction, no doubt, to know that particular books exist,

but that is more easily acquired by looking over a catalogue at home than in a publick room, where one could hardly find time to examine the contents of a single shelf. I saw, but cannot recollect whereabouts, in the Fauxbourg St. Germain, a collection of armour and of various weapons of offence, such as the mischievous ingenuity of man had been able to devise for some centuries past. There were also various models of pontons and flying bridges, and pieces of light artillery and mortars. The armour of Henry IV. and of Francis I. and an armed figure formed from an ancient representation of the celebrated maid of Orleans, and the sword of the great prince of Conde, are to be seen here, and command a degree of veneration and respect, which will always accompany those illustrious names. The keepers showed us in the same room the materials of a second infernal machine, which had been found upon some ingenious Italians; they wished to make it pass for a contrivance they meant to put in practice against the British fleet, but the government knew better. He showed us also some weapon, which had been taken upon Georges, and the pistols of Pichegru. It seems singular that these two names should be connected, but Georges had a mind far above the station in which fortune had placed him, and was more worthy than is commonly supposed of such an association. He had been distinguished as a leader in the wars of the Chouans, and ought not to be confounded with a common assassin. He declared upon his trial and in a man-

ner which carried conviction to the mind of every one present, that if assassination had been his object, he might more than once have effected it ; being a man of great personal strength. He had contrived to be employed to cleave wood for the use of the palace, and had worked as a labourer at Malmaison. He might here certainly have surprised the first consul at any time in the garden, and given a cruel interruption to some dream of future greatness, or of deep-laid vengeance : for hatred and vengeance divide that mind, at the caprices of which all Europe, England and perhaps Russia excepted, is made to tremble. Upon being asked by the Judge, how he could answer to himself the having shot an officer in the execution of his duty, and when all resistance was useless, "I thought," replied Georges, "that I might possibly effect my escape, and I felt it perfectly justifiable to repel violence by force. But the man, as you say, was doing his duty, and I am sorry enough for him to wish that you had been in his place." Pichegru will be known to future ages as one of the greatest military characters of France, and is remembered with affection by all who were of his intimate acquaintance, as a good humoured, cheerful man. What the extent of his plan was, can hardly now be ascertained, but it is said to have embraced half the republick in its ramifications. Providence, in permitting it to fail, notwithstanding the fairest prospects of success, must have decided what was best, but every one must regret the fate of Pichegru, a great and gallant



general, an amiable and kind-hearted man, strangled by a midnight murderer in his bed.

In the course of my acquaintance with a great variety of persons and of frequent conversation with those I have accidentally sat next to, I never found one who did not believe that Pichegru was murdered. You will wonder, perhaps, that such a subject should be canvassed under such a system of police; but there are moments when the publick feeling bursts forth in a way not to be controlled.

“The flesh will quiver where you drive the knife,  
“And sighs and tears by nature grow on pain.”

The Grand judge is said to have informed the first consul at the time of the duke d'Enghien's death, that if all were to be taken up, who spoke freely of that measure, the prisons of the republic would not contain them.

We visited what Kotzebue calls a great and capital collection of machines and models, where various implements of rural industry, ploughs, windmills, water machines, steam engines, and beehives, all very prettily done in miniature, are ranged along upon the different tables of several large halls, which were once in the occupation of the fathers of the oratory. There are models also of all the various machines of spinning and weaving wool or cotton, and a representation of the process of working up clay into porcelain, or leather into shoes; with exact models of the tools used in these and twenty other trades and manufactories. Some

collection of the sort, extending to the latest and most valuable inventions for saving labour, might be of service, but it is hardly probable that any revolution, which can annihilate all knowledge of the various trades that supply us with the necessities of life, would respect this collection of Lilliputian machinery, in forming which, the time of several ingenious artists has been egregiously thrown away. It put me in mind of the emperor of China's observation upon the models of various useful machines which made part of the presents carried to him by Lord Macartney's embassy. "I fancy," said the old monarch, "these pretty things were intended as presents for my great grand-children;" and I should not be surprised if his imperial majesty of France took the hint and converted this great collection of models into a warehouse of toys for the amusement of the younger branches of his family.

We were much pleased with the panorama of Naples, which is the only one we saw. The spectator ascends an elevated seat in the centre of a large circular room, and looks down upon the representation of the city, as he might upon the city itself from the steeple of a church, and no illusion can be more complete. The city of Naples, the beautiful intermixture of land and water in the neighbourhood, crowds in the streets, vessels at anchor, or under sail, the extent of the Mediterranean as far as the sight could reach, and the distant island of Caprea, seemed beneath us. It was superiour to any thing I had conceived possible,

and consoled me for my disappointment at the phantasmagorie, of which I had heard very exaggerated and confused accounts.

We will now, as we have been so long speaking of Paris, make an excursion to Versailles, and it will be, unfortunately, almost the only excursion I shall be able to give you an account of, for the weather has been almost continually bad. The road leads through the Bois de Boulogne, which affords the inhabitants of Paris a delightful variety, and particularly in summer, and of a Sunday's afternoon, when the trades-people and little shopkeepers of the city, with their families, intermixed with the peasantry of the neighbourhood, may be seen strolling in every part of the wood, and dancing on some lawn, or under a shade, or collected in groups before the doors of a publick house. The opulent, who have splendid equipages, and the young men desirous of showing themselves or their horses and curricles, may be seen taking the air here, and even the emperour sometimes condescends to enliven the scene by his presence. A deer is turned loose upon those occasions the night before, and his majesty, after keeping his attendants for hours in the palace yard, and hundreds of hungry Parisians in momentary expectation of catching a look at him, condescends, for an hour or two, to put on the semblance of amusement, and as he moves to his carriage, or as it hurries him along, he bows, and puts on what he means should be a smile, but it extends only to the distortion of his mouth, and to the showing

of his teeth, which are singularly white. At a very short distance from Paris we passed below the hill on which stand the villages of Auteuil and of Passy; the first was to the celebrated Desprèaux what Twickenham was to Pope, and Passy commands the attention of every American as having been, for some years, the residence of Dr. Franklin. I had once, though but for a short time, the pleasure of cultivating the acquaintance of Dr. Franklin, and have played at chess with him. He was extremely fond of the game, and entered into all the spirit of it; pleased, no doubt, at being able to give way for a moment, like other people, to the sensations of hope and fear, to feelings which, in the weightier concerns of life, he very carefully concealed the operations of. He was, at the period I allude to, retired from all publick cares but the government of Pennsylvania, and was gliding cheerfully and almost gayly into the vale of years. You have heard of his discoveries in electricity and have read his memoirs. It is to be regretted that these last were not brought down to the more interesting periods of his life, to events on which the fate of nations depended, and in the direction of which it was the lot of this distinguished countryman of ours, whose talents had elevated him from the humblest walks of life, to bear a conspicuous part. He might have told us, as he looked back upon the stormy ocean of British and American politicks, how far he had been swayed by interest or ambition, how far a sense of injurious treatment and opprobrious language had

influenced his conduct, and what was really in his mind and at the bottom of his heart during the whole of our revolutionary contest; a contest which he affected to deplore, and yet certainly promoted, and by arts not always justifiable even in the relaxed morality of a statesman. Considering him exclusively as an author, we have, perhaps, rather exaggerated his merit, and have supposed him great because we ourselves were little; but he undoubtedly possessed great good sense, great natural sagacity, and a mode of familiar explanation which enabled him to carry conviction home to the breasts of those to whom he addressed himself.\* With these powers of the mind he most meritoriously exerted himself to amuse and to inform, and knew how to promote every sentiment of industry and economy, in classes where those useful virtues are so necessary, and yet so generally neglected, while he seemed chiefly intent on exciting a smile. It has been objected indeed, and perhaps with reason, that too much importance is attached

\* Dr. Franklin would no doubt, and might with great propriety have defended himself against a charge of plagiarism, as Moliere did. "Je regarde ce qu'il y a de bon comme étant de mon domaine, et je m'en empare." He did, however, certainly make very free with the inventions of others, and as he had been preceded in some of his most interesting experiments, so he condescended to borrow, with quoting the authors, several of the jeux d'Esprit which he published. He first unquestionably ascertained the identity of lightning, and of the electric fluid; but conductors for the gradual conveyance of that powerful and sometimes destructive agent had been invented in France, prior to his experiments in Philadelphia; we have therefore given him, in this instance also, some what more credit than he deserved.

to the art of making and keeping money, to petty gains, and to that sort of economy, which soon degenerates into parsimony, and that such high authority has contributed to give a selfish and a sordid cast to our national character. How far the minor morals of Dr. Franklin's school may or may not have had this effect, I know not, but he was certainly sometimes mistaken on subjects of general politicks, and political economy. He mistook the rank and importance of commerce as compared with agriculture, in the different stages and periods of human prosperity ; and the misfortune is, that his opinion and his great name may mislead some modern statesman, who, without his integrity, his good sense, and his practical experience, may, for our sins, be placed for a time at the head of the nation. Such a one, and perhaps he is already in being, may fancy himself a philosopher too, and may be for ascertaining under what circumstances the people of America can exist, upon how little, and how long, and may be for trying experiments upon us as upon animals in an air pump. There is another subject upon which it would have been highly interesting to have learned the opinion of Dr. Franklin. It would have been highly interesting to know what he thought, when arrived at the maturity of reason and experience, of the ultimate effect of the revolution upon the happiness of those, whose fate had been involved in that great event. He could not, I think, but have rejoiced, that the noble stand made by the people of America had tended perhaps to preserve the liberties even of those against whom

their exertions were directed, and who certainly have not declined in any one circumstance of national prosperity.\* I am here a witness, even upon this hostile shore, of the admiration which their fearless perseverance, and their unshaken publick spirit can create; for never was there a power more irresistible at sea, and never were their triumphs more splendid. On our side, without any great addition to individual happiness, there has certainly been a very great increase of all which bespeaks national prosperity, and we have been saved, perhaps, from that degrading state of ignorance, of gross enjoyment, and lazy luxury, which Barrow and Percival describe in the wealthy planter of Ceylon and southern Africa. The mind of the American has now a scope which it could never, but for the revolution, have attained. Its powers have been called into action, and its energies developed. Numbers have made laws, have administered justice, have drawn up forms of government, have commanded armies, and have concluded treaties, who, but for the revolution, would have been toiling at the humblest avocations of the bar, or of commerce, or perhaps have been following the plough. General Washington, notwithstanding the promises of his earlier life, would have been known

\* See Arthur Young's conversation on this subject with the Abbe Raynal. *Travels in France.*

Au reste, le resultat de cette grande querelle confondit encore une fois tous les calculs de la prudence humaine : cette independance de l'Amerique que le commerce Anglais regardoit comme devint lui porter un coup fatal, eut des consequences aussi heureuses que imprevises : le nombre des vaisseaux marchands, ce signe infailible de la prosperite d'une nation, doubla en peu d'annees.

*Souvenirs et Portraits du Duc de Levis.*

but as the most industrious, the most silent, and the best drest man of his neighbourhood, and all the genius and merits of General Greene would have remained obscured under the modest garb and demeanour of a quaker.\* It might have been better, perhaps, if, while we resolutely adhered to the practice of our ancestors in matters of jurisprudence, those who formed the federal constitution had retained a little more of what Mr. Burke calls the drapery of life; if they had infused a little more of monarchy, and had removed our first magistrate somewhat farther by forms and ceremonies from ordinary society.† Should there ever be a President with so much of the old leaven of French Jacobinism as to glory in the neglect of appearances, should he foolishly pride himself upon an unshaven beard, an old great coat, and dangling stockings, let the exhibition be confined to his own household; or should there be a President less meanly ambitious and more unguard-

\* General Greene's attention to military affairs was first excited by seeing the British troops manoeuvre upon the common at Boston. He was then a Quaker, and owner of extensive iron works near Greenwich in Rhode Island, where he had often been seen labouring at the anvil. He was a most amiable and worthy man, and probably the greatest military genius which our country has produced. He was always fond of reading, and it is interesting to perceive, how much his order of battle was that of the Romans.

† A familiar and unrestrained intercourse with the great, and a daily observance of their ordinary actions, have a tendency to diminish that reverence and respect which public opinion is always willing to allow them. *Barrow.*

Jamais l'appareil de la cour, et l'étiquette ne furent plus nécessaires que sous le règne du Prince qui les abolit. Le service chez Louis XVI. était réduit par la volonté du Roi au plus strict nécessaire et encore s'en dispensait qui voulait. Le Maréchal de Richelieu n'en augurait rien d'avantageux pour la monarchie.

*Souvenirs et Portraits du Duc de Levis.*



ed in his conversation, let no casual guest drop in upon his careless hours of evening relaxation, or grow warm in wine with him at the same table. I could have wished too that the President had retained some honours or emoluments at his disposal, and that a degree of permanency had been given to the publick esteem by attaching somewhat of an hereditary nature to personal dignity, and a patrician order of men had thus gradually arisen, in whom the pride of ancestry and the example of noble deeds might have opposed a barrier against that all devouring desire of amassing wealth, by which foreigners pretend to say our nation is characterized, a desire which, however laudable in many instances, is yet certainly very frequently at variance with the laws of honour and propriety. Such an order might, upon other occasions, have rendered still more important services. Their patronage would have cherished the arts, and promoted the sciences, and like the barons of Runnemede or the nobility and gentry of England in 1688, they might have formed the best defence of liberty, in the proper acceptation of a word, which has been so much abused of late years.

One calamitous effect of our revolution is, I think, the fermentation it has occasioned in Europe, and even we of the United States, and our descendants, may have reason to regret, that the successful termination of it should have proved how easily oaths of allegiance can be dispensed with; how easily the most salutary prejudices, the most deeply rooted principles, may be dissolved, and the props of

society removed. A charm has been destroyed, which, operating powerfully upon the human mind, was necessary to good government, and adventurers of desperate fortune will find it easier to promote their views by any expedient, which avarice and ambition, disguised under all that eloquence has invented in favour of liberty, can dictate. Individual states too, who may think themselves aggrieved, and may wish to separate from the general government, will find arguments ready made for the purpose, and will not hesitate to exercise that privilege against the union, which was so successfully exercised against Great-Britain.\*

\* It would be very interesting, now that the independence of America is permanently established, to look back upon the times which preceded, upon the circumstances which principally contributed to bring it about, and upon the reasonings of those speculative persons who foresaw and foretold that great event, or argued upon the impossibility of its ever taking place. Among the latter was the sagacious Hume, who could not bring himself to believe that the colonies would ever be independent of the mother country. A mild government, he observes, and a great naval force would always preserve her ascendancy. But the Abbe du Bos seems to have been inspired with the very spirit of prophecy. This Abbe, who held some place in the diplomatic service of France, during the latter part of the reign of Louis XIV., at a period when the ministry of queen Anne were said to have formed the plan of following up their successes in Europe by an attempt upon the French settlements in North America, published a pamphlet entitled "The interests of England ill understood," in which is the following passage: "England, which seems now in the full tide of success, may end by getting possession of the whole of the American continent, but when this extensive region shall come to be peopled in great measure at the expense of the mother country, what line of conduct will England then pursue? Will a free commerce with all the world be permitted, and will the Americans be allowed to pursue their own interests as they may see best, paying no taxes but of their own imposing, bound by the acts of the English parliament so far only as they may

But I am ashamed to have deviated so far from my narration. We passed the river at Sevre where the manufactory is carried on, which produces the beautiful procelain, commonly called Seve china. It is equal to all that has been said of it, and after declining, as every other great national establishment did, during the revolution, now flourishes again under the peculiar patronage of the emperour. He makes presents hence to such of the sovereigns of Europe as he condescends to be civil to, and has two vases that form the principal ornament of his gallery at St. Cloud, which were made here, and which are valued at four thousand pounds sterling each. The clay made use of is brought at a great expense from a distant part of France, and affords an instance of how much the value of the raw material may be increased by the ingenuity of a skilful artist. This is the case, we know, with flax, made into

think proper to adopt them, and at liberty to give the preference to their own manufactories? If such should be the policy of England, the colonies, which will have been established and defended at a great expense, will shortly prove the rivals and perhaps the enemies of the English nation in all that constitutes their prosperity, and the mother country will be still more weakened by the loss of numbers who will emigrate to this rising empire in the West. If, on the contrary, the government of England, actuated by the only principle which can lead to the establishment of colonies, by a desire of promoting the national interest, should think of governing as the Spanish court does, and treating the people of the provinces like conquered subjects, rely upon it, that this fine and fertile country at the distance of two thousand leagues, and peopled by men of English minds, will not long submit; they will have inherited too high a sense of their rights as freemen not to be desirous of throwing off such a yoke, and their rapid increase in wealth and numbers, and their improvement in every art and science, will soon enable them to do so."

lace, of which I have seen a yard valued at eighty louis d'ors, and of iron, one pennyworth of which, being converted into steel, and made up into watch springs, acquires ultimately a value of thirty thousand pounds sterling.

In the war of the succession to the crown of Spain, the power of France was so broken, that a partisan of the imperial army carried off one of the attendants of the dauphin, supposing him to be the dauphin himself, from the bridge of Sevre.

We arrived at the palace through the town of Versailles, which, from a village, had become a city of eighty thousand inhabitants, but is now reduced to thirty thousand. The proper road, as affording the most magnificent approach, is through a noble avenue of ancient trees. At the distance of about a quarter of a mile from the palace are the stables, which seem almost preposterously magnificent for the purpose intended. From the stables you pass along to a first and to a second court, at the bottom of which stands the principal building, which appears on this side as Louis XIII. left it, but with very handsome appendages in the nature of wings and in a superiour style of architecture. It was in this last court, that the mob of Paris, which Mr. Burke has so well described, was for a moment awed into respect by the appearance of the queen in the centre balcony, with the dauphin in her arms. Every lover of architecture must regret, that Louis XIV. who was not apt to calculate the value of money, should have been here seized with a fit of economy, and left the old palace, which had

served as a hunting seat to his father, just as he found it, rather than pull it down. It is on the garden side that the magnificence of Versailles appears ; the palace is here spread out to an extent of eighteen hundred feet, and adorned with all that the art of sculpture could bring to the aid of architecture ; in the centre is a portico six hundred feet in length, supported by marble pillars of the handsomest workmanship. The terrace, which extends the full breadth of the palace, projects between five and six hundred feet towards the country. It is, in fact, an artificial hill of no mean extent, being partly raised upon arches and partly consisting of a mass of earth brought here for the purpose. It must have cost a considerable part of the millions lavished upon Versailles ; hence at an elevation of about twenty or thirty feet from the original level, the view wanders over no very extensive prospects, but over objects, which, like St. Cyr, which is seen among the trees at a distance, carry back the mind, and generally with a sigh, to the recollection of former times. The gardens are kept in good order ; they have an air of insipid formality, but I can conceive their inspiring a very different sensation, when the ornaments of a brilliant and numerous court were moving along the principal walks, amidst a number of marble fountains, a profusion of water, an endless variety of statues, and various handsome buildings erected for the temporary accommodation of the royal family and their attendants. It was in these that Lewis XIV. gave those entertainments which attracted the admiration of

all Europe, and of which he had frequently the good sense to make a piece of Moliere's the principal amusement. It was customary with him upon these occasions, to have refreshments of every sort prepared for the court, with all the display of plenty that you read of at Comachio's wedding in *Dón Quixotte*; but instead of the wall of bread, and the goodly rampart of cheese, and the kettles of poultry, which captivated Sancho, there used to be a sort of mountain, the grottos of which contained every dish that could solicit the appetite, and the seeming facade of a handsome building, that was all cake and confectionary, and pyramids of sweetmeats, and hillocks of sugar plums, and ornamental vases containing liquors of every sort, and a little grove of trees bending with the weight of preserved fruits of various kinds, while a column of water rising from the midst of this to the height of thirty feet, and received, as it fell, in a circular marble basin, gave an additional charm to the beauty and variety of the scene.

One of the favourite amusements of this great king was to see people eat, and those (says St. Simon) who wished to pay their court, were sure to affect a good appetite and great spirits. Whenever upon any of his excursions followed by a numerous court, it was his pleasure, that the whole train should stop, and that the refreshments which had been brought on in covered carriages for that purpose, should be spread upon the grass in some shady grove, or served up in some farm house, that stood near the road. Upon these occasions he never

tasted any thing himself. The great canal, which is now dry, must have added considerably to the prospect, while the vessels of singular forms, in all the gaudiness of flags and streamers, in which it used sometimes to be the king's pleasure to take the air, gave to the whole an air of oriental magnificence. It was nearly a mile in length and upwards of two hundred feet broad, and was connected at the upper extremity with a branch which led to Trianon, a favourite place of residence of Louis XV. who vainly supposed that he could banish from it all the constraint and formality of a court. The late queen had improved upon the idea, and constructed a little Trianon, where she amused herself with a cottage and a mill and with the appendages of a farm, and something like the appearance of rural life, and soothed her imagination with privacy ; and happy would it have been for her, had she never returned from such scenes to politicks, which she knew nothing of, and to court intrigues, of which she was made the victim. It was not in the nature of the king to differ from a wife he adored, and her opinion was too frequently founded upon the interest, or, perhaps, mischievous suggestions, of some accidental counsellor. Her own experience could be of no avail ; she was young, handsome, and a queen, and had never bestowed a moment's attention upon any thing more serious or instructive than a novel ; her conversation of course was gay, unconnected, and trifling, and made up frequently of the scandal of the day ; any thing relative to business made her look grave, and from

gravity to ennui the transition was rapid and apparent. She was, with all this, unfortunately fond of power, and thought herself capable of governing a kingdom. The Baron Besenval, from whose memoirs I have extracted the above character of this unfortunate queen, concludes by saying, that it was her fate to go wrong with the best intentions, and to displease by those very qualities which might, in private life, have secured the love and admiration of all around her. Too familiar at times in some private circle, and thinking only of being amiable, when she should have inspired a very different sentiment, and again compelled on some publick occasion, to reassume the dignity of her station, she lost, by a change of behaviour, which was inevitable, the regard of those whom she had made her equals, and was accused, without reason, of being frivolous and inconstant. No individual, I sincerely believe, was ever more falsely aspersed than the queen of France, but as a little merit in persons of very exalted stations is seen and felt by numbers, and extravagantly magnified, so a little failing is multiplied in the same proportion, and the French were, besides, too much ashamed, in all their revolutionary madness, of their cruelty to the Bourbons, not to invent every possible excuse for it.\*

\* It was the Queen's misfortune to be fond of raillery, a most dangerous weapon at all times, and particularly so in royal hands. You need not make yourself uneasy about stones for your new palace, said she to the Duke of Orleans, *il n'y a personne qui ne vous en jettera volontiers.*



The expensive water works, which supplied the different fountains, have been very properly neglected, but the garden is, in other respects, well attended to, and the orangerie is in great perfection; the trees are sheltered in vaults under the terrace in winter, but are brought out in summer, and must add considerably to the beauty of the view. Some of them are as old as the time of Francis I.

After walking about for some time, we entered the palace by the great marble staircase, and passed through a suit of rooms, which were formerly appropriated to the guards on duty, into the great gallery, which is one of the finest in the world. I well remember the sensation which I experienced on entering it many years ago, when numbers were waiting with an eagerness, which had more of affection than of curiosity, to see the royal family, and particularly the queen, who was then, as Mr. Burke describes her, just above the horizon, decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she was beginning to move in; a sad change has taken place; the pomp of royalty is fled, and all is solitary and silent. It reminded me of Mr. Gibbon's description of the palace of Constantinople, when Sultan Mahomet entered it after taking the city by storm; a melancholy reflection on the vicissitudes of human greatness, says the historian, forced itself upon the conqueror's mind, as he entered the august and desolate mansion, and he was heard to repeat to himself the very applicable distich of a Persian poet, who, in describing a similar scene, says, "The spider has

woven his web in the imperial palace, and the owl has sung her watch-song on the towers of Afrasiab." The great gallery is two hundred and twenty feet long, with seventeen windows opening upon the gardens, and the same number of mirrors on the other side, corresponding with the windows. A great many of the statues and pictures which ornamented this and the other rooms, have been removed; but some remain, and I was struck with one picture in particular, which represents Sully as he describes himself in his letter after the battle of Ivry; the good king is leaning over him with an air of sympathy and affection, and the little semblance of a triumph with which Muignet indulged his own and perhaps his master's vanity, is extremely well represented. All that was required for parade at Versailles, for the reception of the court on gala days, for the exhibition of the royal family when they dined in publick, and for the presentation of ambassadors, seems to have been in a style of suitable magnificence; but the private apartments were neither as handsome nor as commodious as I expected. The queen's large mirror still remains in what was her dressing-room, and must, from its size and position, have done justice to all that grace of motion, and elegance of form, in defence of which she perhaps imagined, as she surveyed herself, that in such a nation as the French, so famed for war and gallantry, ten thousand swords would have leaped from their scabbards. We afterwards stopped for a moment at the door through which she fled for safety on the morning of the first

of October 1789, and traced the scene of many of the events of that fatal day and of the night preceding, during which La Fayette ought not to have slept or never to have waked again. If the king and queen were uncomfortably lodged, it would be difficult to express the manner in which the greater part of the court were accommodated. See what Arthur Young says upon that subject, nor is even Madame Roland's account exaggerated. It had been the policy of Richelieu to draw the great nobility about the person of the king, and they have since retained the custom of passing as much of their time at court as could be spared from the army. Many of them with palaces of their own, and with almost regal rights, which they might have exercised over a great extent of country, and yet enriched by what the supplies of their own household would have required, were satisfied with very mean and uncomfortable apartments at the residence of the monarch. The consequence was, that they lost all hold upon the affections of their tenants and vassals, and were obliged to fly from the misguided rage of those who ought to have followed them into the field in defence of monarchy. It is singular that the worst features of the feudal system should have remained so long in France, without any of its advantages; that the wretched peasant should have been exposed to the oppression of the capitaineries, and yet have remained so personally unconnected with his lord, as to be ready to massacre his family and burn his castle; while in England, the custom of the great landholder to reside, for a part of the year at least,

upon his estate, and his attachment to agricultural pursuits, and the general necessity of an application to the good will of the people, at least once in seven years, have given him a more than feudal influence long after the destruction of the system itself. Should the sins of Europe, and I may add of America, deserve so great a calamity as the destruction of the naval power of England, and the French be able to land there, which Heaven avert, the conflict would still be long and severe; every day which marked the progress of the invading army, would be a day of battle; they would have to trample upon the bodies of the nobility and gentry, of the merchant, the farmer, the labourer, and the manufacturer; and I will venture to say, that at the worst, no individual of the ancient and noble houses of Great Britain and Ireland would be found fiddling or dancing for bread in foreign countries; they would die at their posts.

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## LETTER LXX.

MY DEAR E——,

We should have visited several of the little towns in the neighbourhood of Paris, more perhaps, from a wish of indulging in that connexion of ideas between persons and places, which is always interesting, than from any thing rare or beautiful that we knew to be seen in any of them;

but the weather has been too bad to admit of it. Madame de Sevigné would otherwise have carried us to Livri, and James the Second to St. Germain. It is certainly one of the best traits in the life of Louis XIV. that he should have received the family of Stuart so handsomely, nor is it one of the least singular circumstances in these times, so fertile in wonderful events, that a descendant of this mighty monarch should have been forced to take shelter in the ancient palace of the Stuarts at Edinburgh. We were at Meudon, and walked upon the terrace which commands a noble view of all Paris, and of its environs and of the Seine, which at this season of the year is a very fine river, and could not but think of the splendid company which we know used to assemble there in the days of Madame de Louvois, when Coulanges and Hamilton were her guests, and the house in the park and the neighbouring mill were made the scene of some imaginary adventure in a Romance, or the subject of a sonnet. The ancient Castle of Meudon was pulled down by the speculators who bought it, and they were about selling the materials for more than the whole estate had cost, when the first Consul interfered, and declaring it a part of the inalienated domain of the government, restored the speculators their assignats, and made the place his own. We were also at Vincennes, which was always a gloomy place, and where no one now goes, I will venture to say, without sentiments of horror and secret execration. Four rows of elms form an avenue to this

ancient Castle, which was built by Charles V. and received some additions and improvements from Louis XIV. whose rage for building was exercised upon every thing within his reach. It has for some centuries past served as a State prison. It was from one of the windows of the great tower that the Duke of Beaufort made his escape, and that the Cardinal de Retz was looking, when the officers in whose custody he was, informed him, that the gardener he saw at work below, was sowing asparagus seed for the use of his eminence's table; and you are sufficiently well acquainted with gardening, I presume, to know, that this was no very comfortable prospect to a state prisoner. It was at Vincennes that Henry V. of England died about 500 years ago of a complaint, which, fortunately for mankind, perhaps, the surgeons of the age were too ignorant to cure. He was a Prince of great qualities, and in some respects not unlike the present master of this gloomy Castle. A young Englishman, with an imagination warmed by Shakspeare, would be displeased perhaps at the comparison, and would tell us of the amiable qualities of the Prince in his frolicks at Hounslow, or in East Cheap, of the meritorious example he gave when he submitted to be led to prison, and of the martial dignity with which he could assume as the Poet says, "All the pomp of the god of war;" but to the inhabitants of France in those days he must have appeared in a very different point of view, and they must have beheld with horror those instruments of his ambition

which make so pretty a figure in Shakspeare, "Leash'd in like hounds and crouching for employment." No sentiment of pity, or sense of propriety, no feeling of remorse ever restrained him in the use of them.\* If his prisoners embarrassed him he made no scruple of putting them to death. If the defence of a town was protracted, nothing less would satisfy him than the ignominious execution of those who had occasioned it, nor did he hesitate to hang up such of the garrisons of Rouen or of Montereau as fell into his hands, when he was anxious to compel those places to surrender. As no scruples could restrain, so no difficulties could deter, nor any danger alarm him. Nor was his policy inferiour to his other great qualities, he could excite the jealousy and knew how to encourage the mutual resentment of his enemies to his own advantage, but his pride would sometimes degenerate into abuse and outrage, and his luxury at the Louvre was an insult to the poverty of the King of France. He took it amiss too, that any one should look him steadfastly in the face, or wear a common garment when they appeared in his presence, and talked of nothing less than of marching to the East as soon as he should have settled the affairs of Europe.

\* One would think there had been a Lancastrian faction, if such a thing were possible, even in Elizabeth's time. The chief Justice, whom Shakspeare makes his Hero behave so handsomely to, is said to have voluntarily occasioned his own death from distrust of the king's intentions.

The people meanwhile were burthened with very heavy taxes, feeling ashamed, says the Historian I have before me, to murmur at the exercise of that usurped government to which they had so tamely submitted. But what principally pressed upon our minds at Vincennes was the death of the Duke of Enghien; an invalid soldier of the garrison, who conducted us about the ruins of the place, and who pretended to feel what was past, as much as any one, pointed out the spot where the descendant of the great Condé, "As full of valour as of noble blood" was basely put to death. You will have seen in the papers of the time how this unfortunate Prince was made prisoner on neutral territory, and subjected to the sentence of a military tribunal for a crime which he could not have committed, for where he owed no allegiance, he could forfeit none; those who sat in judgment upon the occasion seem to have been selected, in order to render the insult over fallen majesty and nobility still greater. Hulin, the President, once waited in a little Coffee-house in Geneva, Murat is said to have made his entry into Paris behind a carriage, and Augereau was a wandering fencing master, a sort of gladiator, who lived upon what could be collected for him in a hat after the exhibition of his skill in public. I am very far, God knows, from envying any of these people, their present greatness, or from repining, that the honours and employments of successful war should devolve upon such gallant soldiers; but that the instruments of Jacobi-



nical rage against all that was elevated in society should themselves be elevated into Princes, and that they should sit in judgment upon the Duke of Enghien cannot but excite our indignation. The Duke had been so fatigued by a long and rapid journey, as to be scarcely capable of answering the few questions which were put to him, and begged he might be allowed to repose himself for a few hours ; this was at midnight, and at four he was awakened to undergo his sentence. After a slight expression of surprise, and rejecting with contempt some proposal to confess what he might know of plots against the person of the first Consul, he followed a soldier who held a torch, down a private staircase into the dry ditch of the castle, and was conducted to an enclosure of a few yards which a private of the garrison had formerly cultivated as a garden, and here standing, for he refused to kneel, and with his face uncovered, for he refused a bandage, by the side of a grave, he was shot and thrown into it. I cannot but believe that there are moments when the person, by whose order this foul deed was perpetrated, regrets that he gave way to those sentiments of hatred, which so often mislead, and which are so unworthy of him, and the more so, as his nearest relations and his mother in particular, for whom he affects very great respect, implored him to refrain. “J’ ai pris mon parti,” I have taken my resolution, was the only answer to be obtained. The whole nation callous as it was become, seems to have been roused upon this occasion to a de-

gree of long forgotten sensibility. There was but one sentiment at Geneva ; at Lyons, it prevented the usual rendezvous at the gaming table for several successive evenings, and at Paris, some lines of Racine expressing abhorrence for those who shed blood unnecessarily, was received with such loud and long continued applause, that the Police was obliged to interfere, and the guard to shew itself.

We have made some other excursions from Paris ; but I find nothing in my notes worth copying and enlarging upon ; and it is time that I should bring these letters to a close. Information very lately received gives us reason to fear an approaching rupture between Great Britain and the United States. We indeed already experience the disadvantages of such a report, and have determined to curtail the plan we had flattered ourselves with the hope of carrying into execution. We shall therefore proceed in a few weeks to Nantes, and from thence to America. I regret extremely that we cannot visit Holland, where notwithstanding the loss of trade, and of all that bespeaks the external prosperity of a nation, and of national honour, human industry still triumphs over the force and violence of the ocean. The old aristocratick interest, the descendants of the De Witts and their friends, and all who ever composed the Louvestein faction, have at length succeeded in driving out the Stadtholder, to whose ancestors they owed every thing which can make life valuable ; but they sigh, if I mistake not,

over their own success, and feel humbled at being made to wait upon the decisions of a master, who is not yet determined whether he shall sell them to some neighbouring power, or bestow them upon a relation whom he cannot otherwise provide for.

In England I had promised myself new sources of information, which would have swelled our correspondence extremely, and added, I think, a new interest to my letters. I had promised myself the satisfaction of visiting the little village in Buckinghamshire, where I had been sent to school immediately on my arrival from America, and though so many years are since elapsed, I should have been glad to have walked over the forbidden ground of those days. I had looked forward also to the pleasure of retracing another scene of my earliest days at Eton, and there are a few friends, (and one, in particular, to whose care and protection I owe every thing, that a father whose place he supplied to me, could have done for a son) whom I hoped to have taken once more by the hand; but laying aside every idea peculiar to myself, I can conceive nothing more worthy the attention of a traveller, than England is at this moment. Alone and unassisted, the English are fighting the battles of all mankind, they are contending for all that is left of law, liberty and independence, and deserve the good wishes of all good men.

Their conduct towards us must have been improper, to have excited the sensation which I per-

ceive it has in America, but allowances ought to be made for the very arduous situation they are placed in, and I should no more quarrel with them for the outrage committed by some solitary Frigate, than I could suppose an inhabitant of Acre would have quarrelled with Sir Sidney Smith for taking an orange out of his garden, or passing over a fence on his way to the breach. I am afraid that there are persons in America, who attach too much importance to the advantages which England derives from a commercial intercourse with the United States, and that they mistake the facility with which we could certainly defend ourselves, for the means of offence ; that they have brought themselves to believe that a war under any pretence whatsoever, with that power, would be popular, and that a great majority of the people would cheerfully submit to all the losses and privations which war carries along with it ; and what is still of far more importance, I fear they are blind to the dangers which threaten us, if England were to fall. Their ignorance and insensibility on this head is as astonishing as it is afflicting ; but this is not the place to expatiate upon either. I trust, however, that whatever our opinions or our conduct may be, the English will be true to themselves. A people so long great, and great because they have been proud, will retain in the last extremity too much of their national spirit to submit to any mean alternative short of absolute and honourable independence, nor will they disgrace a glorious cause by computing the price in money,

which the defence may cost, or the danger and inconvenience it may expose them to. Every Englishman indeed ought to consider as addressed to himself what Demosthenes says to the Athenians, when the Bonaparte of the day was over-running Greece. "What Philip hates the most, is the liberty of Athens, and the energy of our government. Nor is he wrong, politically speaking, in his attempts to destroy it; he knows that though he should have subjugated every other nation, he will never be able to enjoy the fruits of his injustice as long as we are free; that if the goddess whom he adores, if fortune, were for a moment to withdraw her partiality, and he were to experience a reverse of fate, all those whom he has united to himself by force, all those in whom every sentiment of virtuous pride and national honour is not extinct, would rally round us; he knows that we build our fame on preventing any one from tyrannizing over Greece, and on befriending those who are still determined not to submit to an upstart, and usurper. He knows that we alone prevent his entire success; that we alone keep alive the sacred flame of liberty, which is so odious to him, and that we alone possess those treasures, those fleets, and that knowledge which he wants for himself and for his vassals: he is our irreconcilable enemy and has sworn our destruction. Think nothing of the danger and expense our defence may be accompanied with; but let us never cease to think of what we should suffer, if we did not defend ourselves." We shall

leave Paris just as we had formed some agreeable acquaintances, and without having had more than a very superficial view of a great deal that was worth seeing. There is no place upon earth, where a person who does not meddle with internal politicks, and is not of sufficient importance to attract the attention of the government, and has no powerful enemy, may live more exactly as he pleases, nor would it be possible to find a more good natured amiable people to live amongst. Let who will be at their head, I wish them success against every foreign power, who may attempt to parcel out this fine country. But I cannot think their victories abroad, and particularly those of the last campaign, in any degree likely to promote the happiness of themselves or of any portion of mankind. Their chief reminds me of a gamester, whom no success can satisfy, and who is still rash enough to go on playing double or quits. A single defeat of any army commanded by himself in person, would at any time be fatal to his affairs. I mentioned to you in a former letter how much the language of the country people was changed after the surrender of Ulm. It was not entirely the same in Paris, the publick mind was for a long time in suspense as to what might be the event, notwithstanding these first successes, and I could observe at the theatre, that several allusions which had been thrown out for applause were received very coldly. The audience would take no hints. I also found that the paper money was getting rapidly into discredit, whilst the crowds who col-

lected from before daylight at the door of the national bank to get their bills changed, occasioned scenes of robbery and of confusion such as Paris had long been free from. Proclamations meanwhile from the exiled court were passing secretly from hand to hand, and all men were in silent expectation of some great event ; but when the same propitious fortune which gave Mack for an opponent to the Emperour at Ulm, again interfered in his favour ; when the Russians quitted their strong position at Austerlitz as the Scotch in 1640 did at Dunbar, when the King of Prussia, who might have decided the fate of Europe, suffered himself to be awed into inactivity, and an actor could come forward at each of the different theatres of an evening, and read to the audience the bulletin of the day, filled with accounts of success such as have never before crowned the arms of any nation, when fresh trophies were announced and the prospect of a speedy and glorious peace was held out, then indeed the torrent of national exultation bore down every thing before it, and those who did not respect and could not love, were yet compelled to admire. I had no idea when I began this letter that it would lead me to the theatre, but as I am there, and as the theatre has afforded us a great deal of amusement, it may be a proper time to say something of the French stage.

It is fortunate for the dramattick literature of France, that some of their greatest poets have written for the stage, an advantage you will be the more struck with, if you represent to yourself the correct

taste and concentrated good sense of Pope, not exposed as Dryden was to the necessity of writing for bread, or corrupted by the manners of a dissolute court, his command of language, and knowledge of the human heart, connected with such other attainments as might have qualified him for writing a play. That tenderness which breathes in the complaints of Eloisa, that experience which could distinguish and appreciate, and that power of words which could express every incident of life and every form of passion, might have raised a rival to the Phedre of Racine, or the Zaire of Voltaire. It is another fortunate circumstance, that there have always been theatres in Paris of inferiour size and less expensive admittance, where such pieces might be represented as the grosser taste of the lower orders of society required, while the principal theatre, called by way of distinction, the French theatre, was kept free from profanation. The origin of theatrical amusements was probably the same in England and France. The wandering minstrels began, and the clergy, who were jealous of such large audiences, improved upon the plan, as they supposed, of these sons of pleasure, and contrived to instruct and to amuse at the same time, by their exhibition of mysteries, and miracle plays. The drama, however, soon assumed a more worldly appearance, and the poets of both nations borrowed freely from their neighbours the Spaniards, giving into complicated plots and intrigues of difficult comprehension, which those of the one nation have remained too much attached to, and those of the other have perhaps



deviated from too widely. Addison has very well explained, in the *Spectator*, the particular improprieties of the English stage, as contrasted with the decency and decorum of the French ; but this very attention to propriety has been also productive of some defects, and perfection might probably, as in most cases, be found in a just medium between the two.

Voltaire, who, without the elegance of Racine, or the Roman soul of Corneille, and who never perhaps, reached the depth of tragick horror as successfully as Crebillon, has succeeded more generally than either of them, owes his success in a great measure to his acquaintance with English literature, and with the works of Shakspeare in particular. I speak only of his tragedies, for his comedies are most unaccountably inferiour to his other productions. He there learnt to introduce national events, and names familiar to the audience, and to bring in patriotism for a share of those applauses which had been confined almost exclusively to love. The extravagant success of du Belloy, who was an author of very inferiour merit, proved also how successfully Shakspeare may be imitated by the poet's addressing himself to the national feelings and prejudices of the audience. But to return to Voltaire, it must strike every one that the short dialogue between Edmund and of Edgar, and the preparation for the duel in *King Lear*, have given rise to one of the finest passages of *Tancrede*. The closet-scene between Hamlet and his mother, and the whole conduct of Gertrude, in whom a licentious passion

had not obliterated all traces of maternal love, has taught the French poet how to render the character of Clytemnestra infinitely more interesting in his tragedy of Oreste. Mortimer brought forth by his keepers, in Henry the Fourth, with some hints from another English play, has given rise to the pathetic scene of Lusignan recovering his children ; nor could he ever have written his favourite play of Zaire, had he never read Othello. He has there ventured to make a lover stab his mistress and afterwards himself upon the stage, and has even ventured in his Semiramis to introduce a ghost, who was very well received, though no ghost ever rose to so little purpose, for he gives no information, and contributes in no degree to the catastrophe. The effect of the apparition is weakened too by its taking place, not in silence and in solitude, as where the shade of the murdered king tells the sad story to his son in Shakspeare, but before great numbers, and in a very publick place. There is no sentiment perhaps, no turn of passion, no pathetic situation, which may not have been as well described and expressed in some English as in any French poet ; but if a tragedy is to be considered as a production worthy in every sense of being presented to a refined, intelligent audience, the comparison is, I think, very much in favour of the latter nation.

There is more equality perhaps in the comick productions of these great rivals in arts as well as arms, but the theatre could in neither case be recommended as a school for morals. That of En-

gland in particular and especially their comedy is often coarse and licentious, and when not altogether deserving of those epithets, is yet to be blamed for pictures of human life, which convey no good lesson, and for allusions to circumstances, which should not be called into view, and the less so when compared with the modest countenances and chaste demeanour of a part of the audience. It is however very frequently a just representation of human life, and a person whose ideas of the world were to be formed entirely from what he saw there, might acquire no inconsiderable knowledge of the ways and customs of mankind. French comedy on the contrary, with more decency in general, with drollery, and wit, and giving perhaps no unfaithful picture of the human mind, exhibits in some respects but an incorrect view of living manners; for whilst the miser, the coquette, the petit maitre, and the clown are painted to the life, there is a sort of courtship altogether foreign from what really takes place in families upon such occasions, as I am told, and a unity of place so rigorously observed, as puts all probability at defiance. With respect to the unity of place, I cannot conceive why, if we so far get the better of our conviction, as to suppose, for an hour or two, that the actors and actresses are gentlemen and ladies, or heroes and princesses of other countries and of other days, and that the time employed in the representation is equal to four and twenty hours, why we may not, I say, go a step further, and suppose that the personages before us have time enough to go from one house, or even

from one town to another. The Chinese, who are a very wise people, get over the difficulty very ingeniously. The character whom we are soon to figure to ourselves as in a very distant place, gives notice to the audience that he is going a journey, and very gravely getting astride his bamboo, and smacking his whip, he performs it in their presence, by galloping two or three times around the stage, and then gives notice of his arrival. With all the licence, however, which I would willingly give an author as to time and place, I must still wish, that they were more attentive to the unity of action, and that they would not burthen their plays with underplots, which only serve to distract the attention. But the French tragick writers are not without their faults, as I observed before ; notwithstanding the superiour regularity and unity of the plot, and their great attention to the decorum of the stage, they frequently err, where the scene is laid in former times and distant countries, by an approximation to French manners, and as in their comedy, there is always too much stress laid upon the omnipotence of love. Voltaire has ventured, in one or two instances, to write a tragedy, in which no part of the distress arises from this universal cause ; but he has, on all other occasions, yielded to the general opinion, as Corneille, Racine, and Crebillon had done before him ; an opinion which is certainly productive of very great inconsistencies. I can easily conceive that Mithridates, though far in the decline of life, and broken by misfortunes, had still enough of love in his disposition to be jealous of

his wives, and we know from Plutarch what barbarous orders he gave respecting them; but I cannot bring myself to admit, that this great king could, in the midst of his magnanimous designs against the Romans, and when their legions were within a day's march of his capital, have been occupied about a Grecian beauty, and practising a trick, like Mr. Lovegold, to find out whether she loved his son or not. Nor can I bear that Sertorius, at the age of sixty, and whom I know to have had but one eye, or Philoctetes, after twenty years of retreat, and in all the anguish of an incurable wound, should be making declarations of love; that Caesar should make so insipid a speech as to say, that he had fought at Pharsalia for the bright eyes of Cleopatra, or that the gloomy inexorable Electra should mingle her groans of vengeance against the murderer of her father, with sighs for the charms and graces of the murderer's son.

The comick writers are very numerous, and I am sorry that you cannot judge for yourself of the truth and decency of Destouches, the gayety of Regnard, the wit of Le Sage, the originality of Dufresnoy, the lively natural dialogue of Dancourt, and the affecting representations of La Chaussée. This last is considered in France as the inventor of a species of dramattick composition, very common in the English language, but unknown before his time to the French; a composition, the scenes of which are taken from common life, and which, without being as gay as comedy, or as distressing as tragedy, may be said to partake of the nature of both. He never,

however, has given, nor have any of his followers, into the absurdity of those monstrous compositions called tragi-comedies, on which you will find an excellent criticism in the *Spectator*. In enumerating the writers of French comedy I have said nothing of Moliere, whom the consent of mankind has placed at the head of the class he belongs to. His characters are those of human nature itself; but the manners of his pieces are sometimes coarse, and the denouement is frequently improbable, and very hastily made up. Of plot, indeed, there is very little in the best French comedies. Their writers were soon sensible of the absurdity of those surprising turns of fortune, those mistakes by masks and disguises, so common in the Spanish plays, “which drew off the attention of the audience from the consideration of character and language, and describe a man as deceived rather by his senses than by his passions and affections.” Perhaps, however, they have mistaken the reverse of wrong for right, and they may have wanted that wholesome lesson, which an author in England is always exposed to receive from the more noisy and powerful part of the audience, who insist upon being amused in the way they best understand, as they do upon the habeas corpus act and the trial by jury.\* Their attention must be kept up by the intricacy of plot, and they must have jokes and

\* The celebrated Lope de Vega exculpates himself from the charge of violating the unities, as an Englishman might have done.—J'écris selon l'art qu'ont inventé ceux qui n'ont recherché que les applaudissemens du vulgaire, c'est celui qui paye, et si tel est son plaisir, il est juste de lui parler en ignorant.

allusions suited to their ordinary conversation and their pursuits in life. In France it was far otherwise. The dramattick author considered himself as writing for the more enlightened part of the community, and knew no more of the people as a body having certain rights, than he did of the habeas corpus act, or than the government did. And here it may be proper to say something of the manner in which the comick authors of these great rivals represent the personages of each other upon the stage. You know what sort of a representation is given of the Frenchman on the English stage, but surely no Englishman, even of those who sit in the one shilling gallery, can suppose, that the armies who have overrun Europe were composed of such materials as the little half starved figure he sees before him, or that the Frenchman of the stage is any more a real character, than Harlequin is with his black face and party coloured jacket. But in France there are two sorts of English represented on the stage ; the first, which is intended as a caricature, is a well fed awkward figure, imposed upon by every one who chooses to take the trouble, making the most ridiculous mistakes in speaking, dressed in the extreme of the fashion, and very lavish of his money ; the other, whom the author gives us as drawn from the life, is something of a quaker, but with a large stick in his hand, blunt of speech, and rough in manners, but of benevolent intentions, such a person in short as Mr. Josiah Crumpe in Miss Edgeworth's story of the Contrast. But a sketch of the Frenchman in London will perhaps give you the

best idea of these absurd representations. The scene is in a busy part of London, and the daughter of a peer of England is represented as living in the same boarding house (for the unity of place must be preserved) with two French gentlemen, who both pay court to her. She is partial to one of them, and yet very much amused by the other, and is continually in their company, when the peer arrives, and lodges of course in the same boarding house. You now find that his intention is to marry his daughter to Mr. Jack Rosbif, (to whom he had indeed already engaged her,) previously to his sailing for Jamaica, where business of importance rendered his presence necessary. The sprightliness of a young Frenchman, a gay man of fashion, is now very happily contrasted with the sullen, purse-proud importance and inveterate taciturnity of Mr. Jack Rosbif, and the dignified, though rather pedantick good sense of the peer is a foil of another sort, but the manners of the piece are hardly more those of England than of China.

In one of Goldoni's pieces too, the scene of which is laid in London, and in high life, a lady of quality has punch handed round to her morning visitors, and drinks of it herself, and we are told of a cavern known to be in Middlesex, but not yet discovered, from which a band of robbers occasionally sallies.

In another of his plays, the scene of which is laid in Geneva, the perversion of reality is still worse, and we could hardly suppose such ignorance possible (for it does not appear as if there were any



desire to misrepresent) if the proofs were not so undeniable.

The publick taste, however, in France, whether degenerated or not, or whether affected by the growing fermentation which preceded the revolution, seemed returning to a fondness for the ancient drama, when that great event took place, which gave a new turn to theatrical entertainments as well as to every thing else. The principal promoter of this return to the model of the Spanish drama was Beaumarchais, a man so singular, and so remarkable in various capacities, that I may well devote a few lines to him. Born in obscurity, and almost in poverty, and after having exercised with a sort of distinction, the trade he was apprenticed to, he quitted it, and very rapidly attracted the attention, and secured the protection of some of the most eminent personages in the kingdom. Rendering himself useful, where he had been admitted for his pleasurable talents, and as much admired for his wit and knowledge, as for the graces of his person and the charms of his conversation on the most trifling subjects, he became immensely rich without ever having filled a lucrative employment, or pursued any object, to appearance, but his pleasure. The fact was, however, that under all the appearance of dissipation, and with the exterior habits of an idle man, he could calculate in his closet with more than common precision, and could form the most complicated and extensive schemes of commercial speculations. Nor was his attention limited to commerce ; for in those hours of retirement,

when some scheme of idle literature at best was thought to engage his attention, he could look into futurity with the eyes of a politician,\* speculate upon the fate of nations, and build very important consequences upon a commercial basis. A disappointment in the sale of a large cargo of arms and ammunition intended for the African trade, first diverted his attention to the wants of the United States, then the revolted provinces of Great Britain, and he is said to have been the person who prevailed upon M. de Vergennes to espouse their cause. In his earlier life he had more than once been prosecuted on charges, which would have blackened the name of any other person, (for there are offences of which an honest man ought not to be for a moment suspected.) But they were to him sources of celebrity and reputation; and the pleadings which he composed in his own defence are as much read by men of taste among the French, as the letters of Junius are in England and America. His comedies, with much less regard to morality than the decency of the French stage admits, are as intricate, and as full of plot and counterplot as the old English or Spanish plays, and much too long. They were, nevertheless, extremely successful at the time, and are still acted to full houses. It would have been singular that such a man, so noted, and above all, so rich, should have escaped the cruelty and rapacity of Robespierre, and the fact is, he was imprisoned at the Abbaye,

\* Suberat tamen vigor animi ingentibus negotiis par eo acrior, quo somnium et inertiam magis ostendebat.

*Tacitus.*

with a number of others, who were devoted to destruction in September 1793. On the evening, however, before the fatal day, which will always be still more disgraceful to Paris than the St. Barthelemy, he was privately liberated through the influence of Le Gendre, the butcher, whom he had personally offended, by that very Le Gendre whose motion in the national assembly, against the person of the king, was so singularly cruel and atrocious. The fear of not being thought hearty in the cause, and the vanity of going beyond others, were, perhaps, the sources of half the atrocities of the revolution. One consequence of the revolutionary government was to diminish the morality of the stage,\* and to permit, that not only the distinctions of society, but all which the consent of past ages had deemed most venerable, should be held out to publick ridicule, while the laws of the drama were treated with as little respect. But the return to former ideas in all matters of taste, and the well-regulated police of the present day, are perceivable at the theatre also, which is rapidly reassuming its ancient habits. Some relaxation, however, is still observable, and some liberties are allowed to be taken with those religious establishments which were once deemed so sacred. The Visitandines,

\* C'est par ce besoin social de penser comme tout le monde, qu'on a pu s'expliquer pendant la Revolution la contrast du courage à la guerre, et de la pusillanimité dans la carrière civile—il n'y a qu'une manière de voir sur la courage militaire, mais le blâme du ceux qui vous entourent, la solitude, l'abandon vous menaçant, si vous ne suivez pas le parti dominant—le bruit des paroles couvre souvent la voix de la conscience.

Il a existé des momens où l'on est craint de passer pour niais, si l'on avoit montré de l'humanité, et cette terreur du ridicule, qui dans les premières classes ne se manifeste d'ordinaire que par la vanité, est devenue ferocité dans les derrières.

*Mad. de Stael.*

for instance, in which a young man gets admittance into a convent under the disguise of a nun, followed by a wicked dog of a valet de chambre, who is dressed as a friar, is still a favourite piece, and some allowance ought to be made, perhaps, for a composition which, though improper, is not, strictly speaking, immoral, accompanied as it is, with so much humour, and such good musick. There are others, of the smaller pieces, which are extremely well imagined. In one of them, a young physician, who is represented as on service in Germany, mistakes one town for another, and going to an Austrian post, gives orders to prepare for the general hospital of the French army, with so much confidence, that the commandant is glad to hurry out of it and leave him in possession. This gives rise, as you may suppose, to a great deal of flattery, which is lavished upon the emperour and upon his invincible army. Every man in the parterre sits erect upon the occasion, as if he also was a hero, and the piece, which has no great merit in itself, is received with a thunder of applause. In another, two young people of high rank, who had lived miserably together as man and wife, find themselves shut up in a place where the noise of keys and a parade of guards, consisting of servants dressed for the purpose, and the ferocious countenance of the one who passes for the turnkey, are all calculated to make them mistake the antiquated but peaceful mansion of a country gentleman, for a state prison. Their mutual friends it seems had joined in the experiment, and the young people suppose themselves im-

mured in consequence of their complaints against each other, a circumstance which adds not a little to the bitterness of their first conversation in the common room. They soon discover, however, and with a sort of regret, after the first torrent of reproach and recrimination, that they are to be together but for a limited time, and are to be confined, during the remainder of the day, in separate apartments. Their behaviour now changes very rapidly. They soon find means to correspond. They corrupt the guards, who have been directed, as you may suppose, not to be inexorable, and, after a stolen interview, in which vows of eternal love and friendship are mutually made, they are on the point of escaping through a window, at the hazard of their lives, when the master of the house, or the governour of the castle, as they had supposed him, interferes and reveals the truth.\* There is a sort of impropriety in some of their late pieces which was never before permitted, and which, though not liable to the censure of immorality, ought certainly to be discouraged. Characters of the last, and even of the present age, and who yet live in the memory of a great part of the audience, are converted into personages of the drama. Voltaire, Rousseau, Richelieu, the great king of Prussia, and

\* Nothing, perhaps, could give a better idea of the difference between the French and English stage than the manner in which this little piece of *Claire and Adolphe* has been adapted to the latter. The turnkey, who is represented as an Irishman, amuses the audience by singing one of his native songs, and by a number of bulls, and makes love to the lady's maid in rather a free manner. In other respects it is well translated.

even the much-lamented Malesherbes, are brought before the publick, and the actors are made to look, to speak, and to dress as like as possible to the persons whose names they assume. Nothing perhaps, can more strongly express how little sensibility there is in a French audience, than its being suffered, that M. de Malesherbes, whom every one affects to lament, should be brought forth in this manner, to amuse the populace by singing, by sallies of wit, and by a certain eccentricity of character which is said to have distinguished him. Nor does it show much respect for religion, that the story of the chaste Susanna should be converted into a ballad opera. In this last piece the whole story is acted to the life. The chaste Susanna, who is personated by the handsome madame Belmont, is even represented as having made some progress towards preparing for the bath, when the elders surprise her. The rest of the piece is such as you know the original to be, with this addition, that the Prophet Daniel, represented by a mademoiselle of no very good character, sings a song, and tells the Jews, how much better the great nation will treat them, than their law-giver does in the Old Testament. If it surprises you, as indeed it must, that such a piece should be permitted since the re-establishment of the catholick religion, and the restoration of good order in society, you must consider, as the police probably does, that there are seventeen or eighteen theatres open every night in Paris, that the actors can only live by drawing full houses, and that they must some way or other gratify the taste of the

audience, who, like the tired glutton whom Pope describes as labouring through a feast, tries all ways to stimulate an appetite,

“ And calls for something sweet and something sour.”

Strict orders were given, during the revolution, that nothing should be presented to the audience but such pieces as were consistent with the temper of the times, and with the principles that were then avowed; and a whole company of actors have been conducted to prison for daring to give a play in which a king, or other titled person, had appeared to advantage, or when particular passages, which might seem to allude unfavourably to the measures of government, had not been omitted. The present monarch, however, knows better how to manage the nation; for he is better acquainted with their character, with his own strength, and, perhaps, with human nature. Plays, containing passages which might seem to allude to him and to his usurpation, or to the propriety of cutting off tyrants, and restoring the true heir, or which might, in any way, awaken the slumbering affection of the people to the house of Bourbon, have been those he has particularly ordered. He has made one of the audience at the Death of Caesar; and it was by his particular order that *Athalie* was represented. He has more than once been present at the “*Partie de chasse de Henri IV.*,” which used to draw tears from the eyes of every good Frenchman; so at least it was pretended; but the fact is, that those tears were all affectation. The French were never attached to any of their

monarchs, but as they would claim distinction from belonging to so great a prince. They were like the livery servants of a very rich man, who are proud of being in his suite, and of calling him master, but who are ready to throw off his livery and turn their backs upon him, the moment that he ceases to possess the means of maintaining them in idle luxury. Their affectation of loyalty during the monarchy, was like their affectation of Republicanism a few years afterwards, which, whilst it carried them to the excess of atrocity, was never powerful enough to create the least opposition to the presumption of their own servants.

Under every form of government, in short, we must be struck with their mean, unprincipled prostration to power, without enthusiasm, affection, or feeling, as its excuse. Not having been in England for many years, I cannot compare the actors of the two nations; but the French appear to me excellent in comedy. Every character has its representative, and the valet de chambre, the prude, the coquette, and the gamester, are represented to the life. They are all perfect in their parts too, and extremely well dressed. The man of fashion of former times may still be seen in Fleuri; and the countenance, manners, and tone of voice of mademoiselle Mars, are all innocence and amiable simplicity; indeed she acts her part, and looks it so well, that one is almost tempted to regret, that such a mien and such a face should appear upon the stage. You may see in Kotzebue's travels an account of the different theatres and principal actors. Talma appeared to



me, as to him, one of the best actors in the world ; but I can conceive nothing more perfect than mademoiselle Duchenois, whom he disapproves. They have generally, both in comedy and tragedy, the great defect of looking at the audience, rather than at each other ; but this arises from their little disagreements, and, besides, from their living so much together, it is very natural they should wish to see other faces. The chaste Susanna has long quarrelled with her husband, and, being in great vogue, and very affluent circumstances, she takes the liberty of treating the poor man with great contempt. Unfortunately, however, as he is the lover of the troop, and she what is called the *premiere amoureuse*, for which I leave you to find an English expression, they generally act in the same piece, and are very often obliged to appear smitten with each other. He was, upon one of these occasions, so enraged with her, for having refused, that very morning, to be his security for a gaming debt, that, instead of kissing her hand, or the part required, he bit it, to the no small discomposure of the lady's smiles. The acting in general, with one or two exceptions, is better in comedy than in tragedy, where dignity is made to consist too much in a formal strut, a fierce look, and a certain violent emphatical manner of speaking. When Ulysses, in Racine's *Iphigenie*, in the language of the true pathetick, tells the unhappy father, that so far from blaming his tears, he is ready himself to weep, the most enlightened of the deaf and dumb, judging only from air and gesture, would suppose, that, shocked at

some great offence towards the gods, he was going to immolate Agamemnon upon the spot. In another of Racine's interesting pieces, which he composed for St. Cyr, Haman answers the king's question of "How he should reward a faithful servant, the saviour of the state," with so much glaring self-conceit, and such absurd pomposity, that, upon being ordered to carry his advice into execution in favour of Mordecai, the whole audience burst into a fit of laughter. Now certainly Racine, who was tremblingly alive to a sense of decorum, never meant to excite any such emotion. He intended, no doubt, that every honourable mind should be gratified at the humiliation of an insolent and wicked courtier, but it would have mortified him to have heard the house laugh. Elviou, whom Kotzebue speaks of, is one of the best actors and singers on the stage, and appears to great advantage in some of the smaller pieces; he has also a handsome person, and is consequently in every respect an object of universal admiration. The play-houses are all of them rather commodious than handsome, and a great deal of decorum, descending to some seemingly trifling circumstances, is enforced by the audience, who are the more rigid, perhaps, from its being the only sort of jurisdiction which the revolution has left to any portion of the nation.\*

But a Frenchman will tell you, that what is principally to be admired in Paris, is the Opera, a medley of musick, painting, poetry and dancing, calcu-

\* *Nam qui dabat olim.—Juv.*

lated to captivate the eyes and ears of the audience, and (with the airs and graces of the syrens who perform, no doubt) to excite the feelings and to warm the heart to every tender sensation. In these united exertions of the sister arts, poetry soon yielded the precedence to musick, which now has to contend with dancing alone in rivalship for publick admiration. In the Italian language, indeed, it is otherwise, and Metastasio may be said to have attained the praise of true genius; but even he cannot reconcile me to this creation of an ideal world; such a world as could not exist a single day, to such exaggerated pictures of virtue and of vice, to the omnipotence of love, and to the absurdity of making the distinguished personages of antiquity sing. Ariadne deserted by her ungrateful lover, and even Dido, to one who has not lately read the 4th Book of the *Æneid*, might be supposed to pour out her grief in song, and the elevated sentiments of some patriot or warrior might even be enforced by intervals of solemn or war-like musick; but I am shocked to hear a hero sing. All the eloquence of the poet cannot reconcile me to such a degradation in the persons of Hector and Achilles, and much less so in those of Cicero or Cato; and what think you of Regulus, who, after having urged his countrymen upon the most solemn and important of all occasions, to watch over the dignity and safety of the state, turns round and gives them a song, before he ascends the Carthaginian vessel. In modern operas, however, we are not shocked with such inconsistencies. The story is generally taken from some old romance, or

the Arabian Nights Entertainments, or the heathen mythology ; and the musick, for which a certain number of lines of certain length have been ordered, condescends, as little as possible, to borrow aid from sense. The wonders which we read of in the Dunciad are here to be seen in all the perfection of extravagant absurdity. The angel of dulness here plants his standard, and scatters his magick charms in profusion. Monsters and gods, nymphs, shepherdesses and furies, are seen to dance or to fight, as the case requires ; it sometimes happens too from the course of the story made use of, that the horrors of the infernal regions are laid open, the damned are even rolling about in flames and sulphur, and over them, at a distance, the mind is consoled with a view of the Elysian fields, very much in the nature of a Mahometan paradise ; and this medley of absurdities, ending as Pope says, by

“ A fire, a jig, a battle, and a ball,”

is received with as much applause as the victory of Austerlitz. Racine meanwhile, at the French theatre, hardly commands attention ; and Moliere is acted to empty benches, and by the most ordinary actors, and the Comick Opera of former times, in which French musick, if they have any, appears to advantage, is rather declining. It is in

*Note.*—Lorsqu'on entend, au spectacle, cette musique militaire qui appelle au combat, le spectateur partage l'emotion qu'elle doit causer à ceux qui sont menacés de ne plus se revoir : la musique fait ressortir la situation ; un art nouveau redouble l'impression qu'un autre art a préparé, et les sons et les paroles ébranlent tour à tour notre imagination, et notre cœur.

*Mad. de Stül, L'Allemagne.*

the comick opera alone that the alliance between sound and sense in some measure still exists, and we know how happily allied they have been on some occasions by the united talents of Gretry and Marmontel. The comick opera, so called in opposition to the great opera, of which I have already attempted to give you some idea, is very similar to the ballad opera of the English stage, of which Gay is considered as the inventor, and what is not a little singular, it is said to owe much of its improvement to an English naval officer of the name of Hales, who having consumed his fortune, and perhaps injured his reputation, in some love adventure, had fled from England, and passed the last fifteen or twenty years of his life in Paris. He is known in the annals of French literature by the name of d'Hele.

But to return to the great opera. Musick, even with such aid as it still receives from poetry, and from the interesting fictions of fairy tales, and heathen mythology, seems in danger of sinking under the ascendancy of dancing, all degenerated as the art certainly is; degenerated, I say, for it is no longer the expression of gayety, nor is it the serious dance, the school of the graces. It is what Young calls a tempest of agility, a violent exertion of bodily force, a turning round with velocity, and jumping as high as possible to light upon one leg like those leaden figures of Mercury you see on houses or on walls, and all this is attended with an exposure of the person in the female dancers which admits of no description. It

does now and then happen indeed, that the composer of an opera, who has to lull to sleep some vigilant monster, or to charm some guardian of a captive beauty, indulges his genius in strains of simple melody, and that the inventor of a ballad wishes to make his dance emblematical of rural happiness, that they both, in short, return to Nature in their several departments, and to genuine taste, and the performance is then delightful. There is a moment in the Mysteries of Isis when the sister arts of musick, poetry, and dancing are thus most happily united; and I was struck with the redoubled attention of the audience. But such moments pass very rapidly, and one soon returns to the usual extravagancies, and to the jumping of Duport and Vestris.\* The establishment of the opera costs a large yearly sum, exclusively of the receipts, and this is defrayed by the government, which fixes the salaries of the performers, and allows them a benefit after twenty years service. The exertions of a dancer are generally fatal to health in a few years, and this is said to be particularly the case with the female dancers, who, after a strange variety of fortune and of situation, very often, if they live to be old, take their station, I am told, as beggars at a church door, and die in an hospital. The demand of the establishment, meanwhile, is kept up by a supply from needy parents, who are satisfied that their children should be taught to dance, without any

\* If my son does now and then touch the floor in dancing, said the elder Vestris, it is in compassion to those who dance with him.

other education whatever, and, as a great majority of them can rise no higher than to *figurantes*, with salaries of not more than thirty pounds per annum, they inevitably become outcasts of society. One cannot surely but lament that the opera, which affords no very rational amusement after all, should be thus converted into a gulf which swallows up so much youth, innocence, and beauty. The principal dancers and singers are supposed to be always at the orders of the court, and are sent for by the emperour, whenever he chooses to relax a little from state affairs; nor does he spare reproaches if they arrive a moment too late, or are less well dressed than he thinks they should be, or do not perform entirely to his satisfaction. "*Vous avez chante comme des cochons*" was the salutation he received the singers with, when they came to pay their respects to him after his coronation.

The theatre has afforded us a great deal of amusement during our stay here; but I confess myself to have been disappointed at the representation of some of Moliere and Regnard's pieces; not that the acting was deficient, but from a great deal of stage trick which is said to have been handed down by tradition, which is now as powerful on the stage as it ever was in the church. When I observed to a person I once sat next to, at the representation of Regnard's *Joueur*, that there was nothing in the play, as it was printed, to justify Hector's endeavouring repeatedly to steal money out of his master's hat, or the ex-

treme familiarity which takes place between them, I was answered, that it was always acted in that manner. And when the *parterre* found fault with Durincourt's squeezing his handkerchief, which was wet with lavender water, into the prompter's seat, he silenced them by stepping forward and observing that Preville had always acted the part in that manner. It was at the theatre I first saw the emperour. But so great a man deserves to be the subject of a separate letter.

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## LETTER LXXI.

NANTES.

MY DEAR E —,

YOU will not be surprised to see my letter dated from Nantes, after what I mentioned to you in my last. We were beginning to like Paris extremely. We had been at several private parties, and were invited to others; but it was necessary to break the spell, and we resolutely did so early in March, and took the road to Orleans in rather bad weather. From Orleans we followed the course of the Loire to Nantes, and have already engaged our passage on board of an American ship at Paimbœuf. I will now return to my journal, and, having my notes before me, it will still be as if I had continued to write to you every day. We were at the play one evening, and seated near the stage, when in consequence of some preparations in the box appropriated to the emperour, it was



perceived that he was expected. The play was already begun, but the actors no longer commanded the attention of the audience, who remained with their eyes fixed upon the imperial box, and were expressing a sort of tumultuous expectation, when the emperor entered. He was received with shouts and applause. These he answered by a slight bow, and then seated himself in an elbow chair, while three chamberlains, who are in the nature of the lords in waiting of the English courts, remained standing behind. I had, upon this and upon some other occasions, an opportunity of examining his person and countenance, at my leisure, and the impression left upon my mind is that of a muscular man, of about five feet four inches, with very broad shoulders, and short legs. He cannot be very unlike what historians describe Pepin to have been, whom he certainly resembles in fortune; nor is he unlike a description which I have somewhere read, of Robert, eldest son of William the conqueror, who was surnamed *Courte hose*. He has small, piercing, deeply sunk, dark gray eyes, a prominent nose, a chin out of proportion large, a good mouth, short coal-black hair, a forehead that would have satisfied Lavater, a countenance which denotes a man not too well pleased at any time, and easily made angry, and outrageously violent when he is so, with a complexion of bilious, sun-burnt, cadaverous sallowness, which baffles all description. I am told that he sometimes condescends to joke with those about him, but I saw nothing like it in his face, and I

will be sworn that no man ventures to joke with him. His manner appears harsh and sudden ; his voice is said to be hoarse and unmusical, and I have been informed that he never looks those in the face to whom he speaks. He was dressed with the utmost simplicity ; was attentive to the play ; took a vast deal of snuff ; spoke once or twice to the chamberlain nearest him ; stole a sidelong look or two at the audience ; started up at the end of the piece ; advanced rapidly to the edge of the box ; made a hasty bow, and withdrew.

I endeavoured, every time that I saw this great personage, to consider him attentively, and as much without the effect of prejudice to his disadvantage, as I was conscious of feeling none in his favour, and certain of not being dazzled by his high rank and great achievements ; and I tried to determine within myself what would have been my opinion of such a looking person, had I met him in private life. No flatterer will ever be found impudent enough to apply to him those lines of Racine which seemed made for Louis XIV.\* and yet any one would say, at first sight, that he was no ordinary man. Had I met such a person in a publick walk in France, I should have supposed him a foreign subaltern, living chiefly by his ingenuity at cards, and ready to defend his winnings by his sword ; in Italy, where the police is very defective, I should have been uneasy to have met him at the corner of a wood.

\* Dans quelle obscurité que le Ciel l'eut fait naître,  
Le monde, en le voyant, eût reconnu son maître.

With all that mankind has seen and suffered, it was yet to be experienced what an individual is capable of effecting, who, with good natural abilities, and a good education, with health, personal courage, and that degree of temperance which leaves him at all times the full command of all his faculties, is restrained by no sense of propriety, and checked by no feeling of remorse; who, moving forward in the execution of his designs with incalculable rapidity, spares neither bribes, nor threats, nor violence, nor injustice; who, with habits which bespeak extreme impatience, has a slow regular pulse, and never loses his recollection a moment; who acts deliberately with all the energy and impetuosity of passion; who forms the plan of a campaign, as he would form the plan of a game of chess, considering the wish, the want, the liberty, the toil, the blood of individuals as nothing, and thinking no more of the cities to be burnt, or of the provinces to be laid waste, or of the thousands to be left in hospitals or in the field of battle, than of the pieces to be taken off the board or of the board itself; who, supposing himself born to rule over the herd of mankind, will brook no contradiction, and thinks nothing impossible; who is, selfish, arrogant, unfeeling, and inexorably vindictive. Future ages will speak with admiration of his successful campaigns and brilliant victories, of his passage of the Alps, of his inroad into Germany, and his battle of Austerlitz. They will admire all the extraordinary de-

signs that he has had the courage to attempt, and the abilities to execute ; overcoming, as it was said of Cromwell, all his enemies by arms, and all his friends by artifice. But they will apply to him many passages of Cicero's address to Cæsar, in behalf of Marcellus. They will regret that no such arguments as those of the Roman orator found way to his mind, and that, favoured by fortune in war,\* and by that general disposition throughout the nation, of submitting to any authority that could ensure their internal tranquillity, he should not have been animated by a far more dignified ambition, and have availed himself of so glorious an opportunity to establish the best of all reputations. But he has made to himself a scheme of happiness of his own, and, looking down with contempt upon the puny efforts and groveling prejudices of mankind, he cares not at whose expense it is accomplished.

He was born in the year 1769, at Ajaccio in Corsica, in a country where, unfortunately, as it should seem at present for a large portion of mankind, the worst tendencies of the Italian character had been long nourished by all the evils of an oppressive government and all the horrors of a civil war. Every parish and district of the island was divided into parties, who fostered some hereditary cause of hatred, and this gave rise to quarrels at every moment, and frequently to assassinations. There were villages from which it was necessary to

\* Verum animum vincere, iracundiam cohibere, &c., simillimum Deo judico.

*Cicero pro Marcello.*

have two roads to the next market town, that individuals of the hostile parties might meet as seldom as possible.

From the situation and profession of his father, who was a lawyer, and from the description I have heard of the appearance and furniture of the house they lived in, the circumstances of the family must have been far from brilliant. The business of a lawyer, indeed, on an island, where there was no law out of the reach of cannon shot from the batteries of the different forts, must have been a poor one, and we may conceive how readily they embraced the proposal made to them by the French general commanding in the island, of having one of their sons educated at the military school in Paris.

The son thus to be provided for was the present emperor, who seems to have been considered, by all his relations, and from an early period of his life, as a very superiour being to themselves. He is said to have been soon distinguished for the austere regularity of his manners, for his application to books, and for a degree of impatience under the authority of his superiours, and a repugnance to all arbitrary power ; a sentiment which, though it naturally belongs to a liberal mind, is yet not unfrequently connected with the love of power in those who cherish it.

The mathematicks, and particularly as they are connected with the military sciences, formed his principal object of study ; and his friends found no difficulty in procuring a commission for him, at a

proper time, in a regiment of artillery. He afterwards quitted the corps for a few months, and retired to Corsica, but returned to France in 1793. His mother and sisters now accompanied him, and established themselves at Marseilles, where they kept a house which was by no means frequented by the best company ; and where one of the sisters thought herself fortunate in contracting a marriage with an obscure Italian, who, having been a marker at a billiard table, and afterwards a musician in a regimental band, had got together a little money as an under commissary in the army ; and this is the couple who are now prince and princess of Lucca and Piombino.

While the ladies remained at Marseilles, the brother joined his regiment and distinguished himself at Toulon, but was so offended at having been put under arrest, for a few days, after the siege, on account, it is said, of his extreme severity towards the remaining inhabitants, that, though now a brigadier, he was desirous of quitting the service, and trying his fortune in some distant country. He was prevented by the government, however, as Hampden and Cromwell were prevented in the last century from going to America, and remained to fulfil a much more brilliant destiny.

Barras, who had known him at Toulon, who knew his courage and skill, and how little likely he was to be moved by scenes of distress, pointed him out as a proper person to command the armed force in 1795, which repelled a remnant of Jacobins, whose numbers were swelled by thousands of con-

cealed royalists ; and was so well satisfied with his behaviour, as to propose to him a very advantageous marriage with the present empress, whom he began to feel as an incumbrance.

There is something in this part of his history which must embarrass his flatterers not a little ; for it is difficult to comprehend, how a person of his sober and abstemious life, and austere deportment, could have been brought, by avarice or by ambition, to form a connexion which, even at that low stage of morality, was thought discreditable. Had he then cherished some distant expectation of what he has since attained to, I should have supposed him under the same sort of persuasion that the emperor Severus was, who, in uniting himself in marriage, had preferred a lady not altogether unlike the present empress, for *she*, as well as the wife of Severus, is said to have had a brilliant fortune promised her by a *soothsayer*, or to have been, what the astrologers said of Julia Domna, of royal nativity. You will see the story of this last in Gibbon. She possessed, it appears, many good qualities, and many charms and allurements, and was admired, upon all occasions, for her gentleness and humanity ; but the irregularity of her conduct in private life afforded ample subject to the pen of scandal, nor was it possible, says the historian, for the most extravagant panegyrist to rank chastity among her virtues.

His success in Italy, and his bold approach towards Vienna in 1797, are well known ; but it is not, perhaps, sufficiently remembered, that, carry-

ing as it were, the sword in one hand, and poison in the other, preceded as Mars was

By terror, treason, tumult and despair,  
Friends of the God, and followers of the war,\*

he weakened the defence of the states he attacked, by deluding their subjects into dreams of liberty and independence, which it could never have been his intention to realize,† and that he artfully seized the moment of proposing those terms, which led to the peace of Leoben, when the Austrians had gained his rear, and rendered retreat, in case of misfortune, impossible. The glorious peace by which so successful a war was terminated, rendered Bonaparte the idol of the whole nation. The Directory, who were now oppressed with the greatness of their own general, became desirous of giving employment to his energy and resolute character at a distance, and readily consented to a plan which he proposed, of annexing Egypt to the republick, even though Switzerland, the ancient and faithful ally of France, was to be ravaged, and the independence of Malta annihilated, in order to furnish the funds necessary for the expedition.

His success in Egypt, if we consider the great disparity of force, has been, I think, exaggerated. It was frequently attended with circumstances of

\* Dryden.

† "Nations of Italy," says the proclamation, "the French army is come to break your chains. The French are the friends of the people in every country. Your religion, your customs, your property shall be respected. The nations of Italy may consider the French as their brothers, &c."



unnecessary rigour, and unprovoked cruelty ; and I am told, that those who mean to pay their court to him, and who know him, never speak of Egypt in his presence. But it is impossible not to admire the firmness with which he bore his repulse before Acre, and the proud ascendancy over the minds of others by which he silenced all complaints, and prevented all reflections. The gallant remnant of his army, who might with justice have upbraided him for the waste which had been made of their strength, and the distress they had been so unprofitably exposed to, seemed rather disposed to solicit his forgiveness for not having done more.

His last exploit in Egypt was the attack of the Turkish post at Aboukir, and here Fortune, whom he has almost converted into a goddess, seems indeed to have befriended him. Miot, one of his warmest admirers, asserts, that if the Turks, who were able to repulse the first assault upon their principal redoubt, had not sallied out, in the moment of success, in order to cut off the heads of the dead and wounded, according to their barbarous custom, and thus exposed themselves, in disorder, to the attack of a fresh column, the attempt would, in all probability, have been as fruitless as Acre.

But one of the most singular events in the life of Bonaparte is his return to France in the year 1799. He had left it with forty thousand chosen troops, with twelve sail of the line, and all the means of establishing a great and flourishing colony. The losses of the republick in the West-Indies

were to be thus splendidly repaired ; the sacred land of Egypt, the cradle of the arts and sciences, was to be rescued from the barbarians, who had so long oppressed its wretched inhabitants ; commerce was to assume a direction which the hero of a former age had given it ; and a mortal blow was to be inflicted upon England in the destruction of its Indian empire. But how were these splendid prospects realized ? He lost the whole of his fleet ; he deserted the poor remains of his army, and returned, like Xerxes, after the battle of Salamis,\* a poor fugitive in a single frigate. But the weakness and profligacy of the directory, and the extremely bad conduct of their agents and officers, had so reduced the power of the republick, that the losses and disgraces of the East were overlooked and forgotten, and the general, who might, in other circumstances, have been made amenable to a court martial, was received as a deliverer. The military hoped for an end to that disgrace which had lately obscured the glory of the French arms ; and a party in the government were desirous to avail themselves of his resolute mind, and of his influence with the soldiers, in the execution of a plan which was to place the power of the republick in their hands, at the expense of their colleagues ; but Napoleon and his brother Lucien were too cunning for the abbe Sieyes and the director Barras.

In violating the constitution, and destroying by an armed force, that government which they had sworn to obey, they chose that the profit should be

\* Sed qualis rediit ? nempe unâ nave, &c. *Juvenal.*

for themselves and followers ; nor were the feelings of the nation such as might have been expected upon the occasion. They doubtless considered the conduct of their general as irregular, but they saw with pleasure power wrested from the grasp of unprincipled, unqualified men, and hoped for a more equitable and lenient government in the hands of a gallant soldier, misled, to a certain degree, indeed, by ambition, but with none of those petty enmities to satisfy, or those vicious habits to indulge, which had marked the conduct of that race of inferiour lawyers, who, under the mask of republicanism, had so long oppressed them. His education, and the tenor of his earlier life, it was supposed, would have induced him to follow the example of Monk, in England. All ranks were gratified, meanwhile, by the splendid and decided success of the French arms, as soon as they were restored to his direction.

The changes which have since taken place are such as he could not possibly have foreseen or intended ; but he has skilfully availed himself of every opportunity that offered to enlarge his power ; and his views having gradually expanded, and every caprice almost of his ambition having been successful, it is not improbable that he now considers Providence as having thrown the right, as well as the power of government into his hands.\*

It has been his policy to keep the nation engaged in war. This has gratified their military genius,

\* Il a comme une sorte de superstition envers lui meme, ce terrible Attila, dit Madame de Stäel, il croit en lui, et se regarde comme l'instrument des décrets du ciel, et cette conviction mele un certain système d'équité à ses crimes.

and afforded them the sort of satisfaction they are most sensible of, while it has enabled him to provide for many needy followers and relations: for he makes as free in the distribution of the kingdoms and principalities of Europe as if they had descended to him from a long line of ancestors. He would have done better, I am persuaded, to have restored the ancient royal family (the establishment of a republican government was out of the question;) but not having thought proper to do so, it is probable that he could no otherwise have preserved the nation from scenes of internal discord than by the assumption of sovereignty. Arbitrary power was become a necessary evil, and, every thing considered, it could not, perhaps, have been better placed. His domestick administration is, in many respects, deserving of praise, and his code, though liable to the charge of inconsistency, in retaining some ill-judged vestiges of democracy, is in general well adapted to the situation of the nation, and to the administration of justice; but the trial by jury has been abolished in all criminal cases, and the law which ordains that the prisoner should be examined in a certain time after his arrest, was forgotten as soon as made. Torture, too, though contrary to law, is said to be applied in private to enforce confession, and the agents of the government leave no means unessayed to blacken the reputation of those who are to be brought to trial. I have seen Moreau's name published in the *Moniteur*, at the head of a long list of traitors, who were in the pay of England to assassinate the first consul, the week before

he was to be tried. The present code has put an end to the scandalous abuses of the republican law of divorce, and religion is again protected and encouraged ; but neither the clergy nor the judges are sufficiently paid to render them respectable and independent.

His foreign enterprises, though seldom the result of any fair and liberal policy, are conducted with great ability ; and when he deviates from generally received opinions in military affairs, he never fails, by his success, to remind one, if we may compare war to poetry, of those writers, who, according to Pope,

“ Can snatch a grace beyond the reach of art.”\*

Such too is the brilliancy of his name, and the overruling influence of a great réputation, that if he fails, if the event should even be disastrous in the extreme, as in Egypt, or at St. Domingo, if he violates his engagements, as in the case of Italy and Switzerland, his losses and disappointments make no impression to his disadvantage. His want of good faith seems hardly noticed, and the world speaks only of his triumphs.

His guards are numerous and in the highest state of discipline, and his court the most brilliant, I am told, in Europe. Those who are permitted to ap-

\* Quelquefois dans sa course un Esprit vigoureux,  
Trop resserré par l'art, sort des règles prescrites,  
Et de l'art même apprend à franchir les limites.

*Boileau.*

Il en est de même dans tous les genres : combien de fois un grand Général n'a-t-il pas manqué sciemment à quelqu'un des principes reçus, quand il a cru voir un moyen de succès dans un cas d'exception ! *La Harpe.*

pear at it, for there is by no means the indiscriminate crowd of former times, are most splendidly dressed, nor is he, with all his cares, indifferent to that circumstance. A lady, whose appearance he was not satisfied with, was, upon one occasion, ordered to withdraw; and it was owing to the humanity of the chamberlain in waiting, who ventured for once to deviate from a strict interpretation of the orders he had received, that she was not forced out in a contemptuous and disgraceful manner. A printed paper, more in the nature of a mandate than of an invitation, is sent to those whom he means to see at court upon great occasions. It was thus, after the battle of Austerlitz, and when great numbers were collected in the antichamber, they were instructed, by a sort of master of the ceremonies, how they were to conduct themselves. A bow or a courtesy was to be made at the door, on entering, another when opposite the throne, where sat the emperour and empress, in all the dignity of empire, and a third at the door of exit. Not a word was to be said, and, having been discharged, they were left to go round through the open space before the palace, and find their carriages as they could.

He eats and sleeps less than most men, and looks into every thing himself. It would be better, perhaps, for the prosperity of the empire, if he suffered certain sorts of business to devolve upon others, for there are subjects upon which he is universally allowed to be uninformed. He is said to understand neither finance nor trade, nor how best to encourage those manufactories he would wish most to promote.

It was a considerable time before he could comprehend why his flotilla might not get to England, and he is at times singularly deficient in matters of general policy, and extremely impolitick in his conduct towards neutral nations.

He sometimes plays at cards for a moment, and now and then, in small family parties, is seen to dance ; but then it is without any sort of pretension to fine steps, and like a man who dances for exercise and to promote digestion.

To his relations and followers he is liberal of that which does not belong to him, it is true ; but of that which he might keep for himself, he does not, however, seem at all ambitious of acquiring a reputation for generosity.

I travelled into Italy last year, a few weeks after him, and was desirous, as you may suppose, of listening to the multitude of little anecdotes his journey and passage of the Alps, previous to his Italian coronation, had given rise to. The servants of the household always preceded, and prepared his meals ; the materials of which together with the use of the rooms he occupied was sufficiently well paid for by a steward who attended. To the postillions and guides, however, many of whom had provided new clothes for the occasion, not a sixpence was given at the time, nor to the postmasters who furnished the horses ; but a month or five weeks after there came a commissioner who settled all their demands, very justly indeed, but not in a way to abolish the unfavourable impression which had been already made, and from the funds of the de-

partment. It had been the same on his journey to Marengo and back again, nor did he ever deviate into any thing like generosity but in one instance, when a guide, having saved him from falling down a precipice, was presented with a purse of fifty louis d'ors. I ought in justice, however, to mention an anecdote of him upon this occasion, and the more so, as I can vouch for the truth of it. A lady of Geneva being upon a visit to her friends at Lyons, a little before the revolution, was told of a young Corsican who was confined by sickness in an upper room of the hotel Garni, where she lodged. All that the people of the house knew of him was, that he was an officer of artillery, that his name was Bonaparte, and that his purse was very slenderly furnished. Her charity, for charity is a virtue proper to Geneva, soon carried her to the sick man's bed side, and she had at length the satisfaction to see him so far restored as to set out for his regiment, with many expressions of gratitude for her maternal care, and many wishes that fortune might ever enable him to testify his gratitude. On his coronation she wrote to him, and took occasion to mingle with her felicitations some account of her own situation, which the casualties of the times had rendered less prosperous than formerly, nor was she long without an answer. She received a very handsome letter, containing bank notes to the amount of four hundred pounds sterling, and very friendly assurances of immediate attention to any application, which it might be convenient to her to make hereafter.



In his intended journeys from place to place he is always very secret, and, when once in motion, extremely expeditious, rather, I believe from peevishness and impatience than from any solicitude for the safety of his person, which is always sufficiently well guarded.

If his servants should suppose, from what they may have heard him say, that he was going to take an airing, and should make preparations for the purpose, he reprimands them, and orders his carriages put up, and perhaps orders them out again the moment after. He has even been known, upon such an occasion, to have invitations sent out, if they can be called invitations, for a ball, or a concert at court, and to set out on an excursion to the sea coast, and sometimes to a very distant part of his dominions, half an hour before the guests are expected. Those who accompany him upon such occasions know nothing of what is to be done, till they are told to get their hats and swords, and that the emperor is ready. On his return from a campaign or an excursion, no man presumes to know which of the imperial palaces he will drive to; but the keepers of all, from St. Cloud to Fontainebleau, must be ready for his reception. It offends him that any one should guess at his meaning, even in trifles, and he is extremely impatient of what in the least approaches to an appearance of contradiction, and so suspicious of seeming to be governed, that those who wish to bring him over to any change of opinion, must use great circumspection. Mounier, a distinguished name in the earlier part of the revolution,

who died the other day, was almost the only one of his counsellors who dared to differ from him, and this would render him at times outrageous and even abusive ; but I find by the *Moniteur*, that he has provided very handsomely for Mounier's children.

In speaking of this extraordinary man, we ought always to bear in mind his singular elevation from so low an origin. No degree of good sense, perhaps, which heaven ever blessed an individual with, could have withstood so much flattery, so much success, so much of what the world call prosperity, such abject servility in those who were but a few years ago his equals, and such mean compliances in the neighbouring princes. We cannot be surprised, therefore, if Bonaparte should be among men, and with sovereigns, even what a bold and fractious child, who has never known restraint, is with other children. Had he lived some centuries ago, his flatterers might easily have persuaded him, that the name he had borne before his exaltation was by no means that which belonged to him. They would have traced his lineage to a much higher source, and have made him the son of Hercules or of Jupiter Ammon.

Notwithstanding his long established habits of dissimulation, for there are cases in which he condescends to dissemble, his prudence has sometimes so far forsaken him, that he has spoken contemptuously of the nation over whom he rules, and ridiculed their frequent changes of government. On its being once mentioned to him, as a reason for patronising the first production of an author, and

for its having been thought proper to speak more favourably of him in a review, than his work, perhaps, intrinsically deserved, that the young man was of a family long distinguished in the annals of literature, "Why you would not surely," said the emperor, "carry your ideas of hereditary right so far! no, no, whatever we lose, let us at least preserve the republick of letters."

He is not, however, a member of this more than of any other republick; he writes incorrectly, and in a very bad style,\* and is far from being eloquent in speech. His sentences hang awkwardly together, and are produced by starts. There is something, nevertheless, which Plutarch might have quoted as worthy of a Spartan, in his answer to marshal Soult, at the battle of Austerlitz. "The marshal is embarrassed, sire," said the aid-de-camp, "at the superiour force of the Russians which is moving to attack him, and foresees that he may be obliged to shift his ground." "Tell Soult, *I* foresee no such thing," was the answer. "He must die where he is."†

\* I have seen several productions of his which would not bear criticism; but the following letter, which was addressed to the widow of admiral B—— after the battle of Aboukir, gives a very good idea of his style: Je sens vivement votre douleur. Le moment qui nous separe de l'objet que nous aimons est terrible. Il nous isole de la terre; il fait éprouver au corps les convulsions de l'agonie; les facultés de l'ame sont anéanties; elle ne conserve de relation avec l'univers qu'au travers d'un cauchemar qui altere tout. Les hommes paroissent plus froids, plus egoistes, plus méchants, plus odieux qu'ils ne le sont réellement. L'on sent dans cette situation que si rien ne nous obligeoit à la vie il vaudroit beaucoup mieux mourir. Mais lorsque apres cette premiere pensée l'on presse ses enfans contre son cœur, des larmes, des sentimens tendres raniment la Nature, et l'on vit pour ses enfans, &c. See Pieces officielles de l'armée d'Egypte.

† J. Cæsar could not have expressed himself more forcibly, and with more decision; and there was something very similar in his orders to

He has no respect for the nation, as I have observed, nor have they any affection for him. Even his victories and acquisitions of territory and influence no longer flatter them. They seem to fear, and perhaps with reason, that France may sink at last to be a mere province in some great western empire, the plan of which appears every day to be more and more unfolded. Of the parties which divide the nation, the royalists cannot like, and the republicans and jacobins must hate him, while many others who are indifferent to the form of government, and would sacrifice a great deal for domestic security, complain bitterly of taxes, and groan under the loss of their children by the conscription. Others, again, feel hurt and offended at the elevation of several individuals whom they remember as equals, or perhaps inferiours; and they must all agree in deploring those measures which have led to the arbitrary and despotick government of a single person, who was no way entitled to any such preference.

A great deal more has been published of him than could well be known. Great allowances too, ought to be made for the resentment of those whom he has injured, and the jealousy and malignity of others. I believe, however, that, like the emperor Valentinian, whom he is not unlike in fortune and character, he is frequently more apt to indulge the furious emotions of temper, than to consult the

Sallust, one of his lieutenants, who doubted the practicability of what he was directed to effect. It is needless to deliberate, said Cæsar, on the probability of success, our circumstances admit of no delay, and there can be no excuse for disappointment.

dictates of reason and magnanimity. The expressions which he gives vent to on those occasions are not, indeed, quite as fatal to the object of his anger as those of Valentinian. He does not call out "Strike off his head; burn him to death; beat him with a club till he expires;" but he spares no opprobrious epithet which a life for the most part spent in camps has brought him acquainted with, and his ministers are said sometimes to bear the marks of his displeasure, as in the good old times of the Czar Peter. There is a humble civility of demeanour, too, in his menial servants, which indicates a strict and regular master; but he has been singularly attentive to all his relations, and respectful towards his mother. He had a great deal of trouble with them all when he was first forming his court, and spared no pains to have them instructed in every sort of regal etiquette, the memory of which had been retained by a few old attendants of the exiled family, who had survived the revolution. His sisters are said to have provoked him extremely, upon these occasions, by their indocility, and by their sometimes laughing when they should have gravely taken their lessons; but the empress, who had formerly lived at court, has more easily assumed the manners proper to her high station, and plays her part to perfection. She is said to be always affable and generous where she can, and as she dresses to advantage, there are times when she is still a pretty woman; being no longer exposed to the temptation of gaming and to various sorts of extravagance, she is much better spoken of than

during the consular government, when her custom was one of the greatest misfortunes that could befall a milliner or shopkeeper of any sort, and her stopping at a house in travelling, a very serious calamity to the owners of it. Scandal, which, for a time, made so very free with her name, now leaves her unmolested ; nor is it very busy with the emperor, who, in deviating into some irregularities, has been merely biassed, I am persuaded, by the desire of appearing what the world had been accustomed to in persons of his rank, like Mr. Jourdain, in the *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, who, wishing it to be forgotten that he had ever kept a shop, was desirous of giving concerts on a Wednesday, as he was told all the nobility did.

I have seen two of his brothers ; Joseph, whom he is endeavouring to make king of Naples, and Louis, for whom he is looking about for a settlement. They are said to be, both of them, men of unambitious tempers and domestick habits. Joseph lives with great magnificence in the country, but has not showed himself much in Paris this winter, and has never been as happy, perhaps, as when his hopes of fortune were built upon a contract for supplying the cavalry with saddles. He is said to be a man of sound judgment, and very much relied upon by his brother ; the other is a slender, sickly looking man, with a solemn and thoughtful countenance. He has been deprived of the use of his right arm by a stroke of the palsy, is unfit for any active pursuits, and would gladly, I believe, lead a life of retirement. Lucien, who has acted a distin-

guished part in the revolution, I have never seen. Having amassed vast sums of money when in power, he has lived for some time at a distance from court, but in the style of a prince. He has never, it is said, approved of Napoleon's usurpation, nor would he consent to be divorced from his wife, to whom the other had taken an objection, on the score of character, or of former connexions. When pressed upon this subject, he not only resolutely refused, but threw out some reflections upon the choice which his brother had made of a companion for life, adding, that he believed the emperour took him for a Frenchman. There are several sisters of the family ; but the only one I have seen is madame Murat, who is handsome, with a great deal of the Napoleon character, however, in her face. The princess Louis has nothing distinguished in her appearance ; but seems good-natured. It was at a meeting of the corps legislatif that I saw these ladies, together with the empress. They were seated in a box immediately in front of the emperour, and at the foot of his statue, which, with less observance of propriety than is usual in this land of taste, is placed opposite to the throne, and in a costume that partakes more of the gladiator than of the emperour.

The hall has the air of a handsome theatre, with what might be the pit and boxes thrown into one, for the accommodation of the senate, the legislative body, and the tribunate. Above is a gallery for spectators, and in the centre, facing it, is a small recess, in the nature of a stage, where the throne

was placed, with room for a dozen or more persons about it.

The speech which the emperor delivered was such as you have seen in the papers. It was replete with eulogiums on the army, nor was it less expressive of his high sense of the proofs of affection given him by the whole French nation. It contained also a wish for peace, even with England, but breathed a dreadful spirit of enmity against the queen of Naples, whom he threatened with the full weight of his implacable vengeance. He added, for the information of his faithful subjects, that a few ships had been lost in consequence of a tempest at the conclusion of an action, which had been very imprudently hazarded against superiour numbers. This speech, though short, he read, and to appearance, with some difficulty, without once removing his eyes from the paper, and without any action, except a motion of the hand when he spoke of the queen of Naples. He seemed, in short, far otherwise than I am told he is upon the field of battle. He was agitated, I observed, and he breathed with difficulty ; and, whether oppressed with the splendor which surrounded him, or out of patience at the tediousness of the ceremony, there was a mixed expression of anger and of sorrow very strongly marked upon his countenance. I do not think that in the whole course of my life I ever saw a countenance which held out less encouragement to any one who might be disposed to ask a favour from, or throw himself upon the mercy of another. I now felt more forcibly than I had yet done



in France, the blessing of being born in a free country, and as we looked down upon the plumes which waved below, it had the appearance of some splendid exhibition at the opera, while the emperor, in his Spanish dress, received with shouts of applause and the clapping of hands, and saluted again in the same manner when he had finished speaking, instead of conveying to my mind any idea of regal dignity, made me think rather of some favourite actor in Richard III., nor would the expressions which the historian applies to this valiant usurper of the crown of England, be inapplicable on the present occasion. "If one could forget the danger of the precedent in so flagrant a usurpation, it might be confessed that he was in many respects, most eminently qualified to reign. He had courage, capacity, and knowledge; and he enacted wise laws and salutary regulations. But he was dark, silent, reserved, selfish, and cruel, a stranger to every soft emotion, and perfect in the arts of dissimulation. His ruling passion was ambition, and, in the gratification of this, he could trample upon any law, either human or divine; or commit any crime which, even at a hasty view, seemed necessary for his purpose."

I had liked his appearance much better a few days before, on the parade at the Carousal, where his horse, as Comines says of Charles VIII. gave a dignity to his air, not unworthy the conqueror of Marengo and Austerlitz. These parades occur very frequently when he is in Paris, and draw an immense crowd, as if it were a novelty to see

five or six thousand men under arms. The troops perform no evolutions, on these occasions, but remain in their ranks, while the emperor either rides or walks about, inspecting every thing, from the harnessing of the flying artillery to the cravat of a conscript. The soldiers are, for the most part, young men and very much of a size. There was nothing to be admired in their marching; but I was struck with their silence and their general air of obedience. The officers, on the contrary, make an appearance in which more of the national character is perceivable. They are frequently handsome, but seem to put on as fierce a look as possible, and have a certain semi-barbarian smartness in the size of their hats, in the manner of wearing their sash, and in the display of their whole person. This may do very well in the field, but it seems to unfit them for society, which has so far gained by the change, if half what we have heard be true, of the dissolute lives and seducing arts of their predecessors. A French officer is now dangerous only on the frontiers and to the enemy. At home he forms one of a class apart, which does not aspire to be ever seen in good company. The pay of the common men is still only five sous a day, with a ration of bread and wine. They are allowed no meat, except when in active service.

What surprised me most, at the only review I was present, was to perceive the numbers of people who burst through the guards, in order to present their petitions. The emperor received

them very graciously, and gave the petitions to a person who followed him with a large bag for that purpose.

Heaven alone knows what will be the end of this extraordinary man. He has great abilities unquestionably, nor are his talents for war unaccompanied by many such as could best fit him for the arts of peace. "Rising from a private station, and covering his designs under seeming obedience to a government which he trampled upon, when it ceased to promote his views, he has served all parties patiently for a while, and commanded them all victoriously at last. He has overrun every corner of Europe, and subdued, with equal ease, the poverty of the north and the riches of the south. He has made for himself a station among princes, and is not only adopted as a brother, but counted as a superiour by these gods of the earth."\*

But how has mankind been benefited by these great events? The pride of a powerful and gallant nation is humbled by the ascendancy which their own servant has dared to assume over them. Those barriers which separated one kingdom from another, and which served to secure the repose of Europe, have been broken down; a wider field is now opened for the range of ambition at the expense of the human race; and a death-stroke has been given to liberty in every corner of the continent. Neither morality, meanwhile, nor religion,

\* Hume, of Cromwell.

nor science, have been promoted by those victories and that success which have been so much extolled ; and *that* name which might have been transmitted to future ages with the blessings of a grateful posterity, will serve only, as Johnson says of Charles XII.

“ To point a moral and adorn a tale.”

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*Note.*—The vast empire which at the close of the year 1813, extended over the rich and populous countries bounded by the Pyrennees and the Alps, the Rhine and the two seas ; which reckoned in the field and in the garrison more than 500,000 warriors ; which could easily reinforce these numerous battalions with at least an equal number of citizens, accustomed to camps, and in the flower of their age, whose existence seemed to be guaranteed by twenty years of victory, and by the unparalleled good fortune of a chief who had long been esteemed the arbiter of nations, and been named the man of the destinies ; this vast empire overthrown to its very foundation in a campaign of three months ; all the Princes of Europe occupying and inundating with their troops two thirds of its territory ; its warriors sacrificed in murderous and useless combats ; its chief surviving that reputation for talent, the delusion of which so long constituted and upheld his power ; that man of indefatigable activity suddenly struck with a species of stupor, crouching under the iron hand of destiny, and descending like an actor who has finished his part from a throne, which he knew not how to preserve, and in the defence of which he did not dare to die ; this is one of those astonishing spectacles, which was reserved for an age fertile in revolutions ; it is one of those grand catastrophes which form an epoch in history, one of those crises which decide the fate of nations, and often extend their tremendous effects to the remotest posterity.

Campaign of year '13, by B. F. F. Giraud.

## LETTER LXXII.

MY DEAR E——,

A GREAT deal might be said of those who are conspicuous at the court of the emperor, or in the higher departments of state ; but the world has had their history over and over again, and you have, therefore the same means of information as myself ; as to their persons, I saw scarcely any of them, except at too great a distance, and in too great a crowd to distinguish them properly.

Of those who are members either of the senate or legislative body, there are but a few, whose appearance, though they are all most sumptuously dressed upon every publick occasion, seemed suited to the rank they held ; they were in general the least well-looking part of the nation, and many of them had a low and vulgar air. With the exception of persons who go to court, the men in France dress very little. Black, or dark blue are the most fashionable colours for a coat, and English kersimere and velverets are universally worn. There was a period during the revolution when every man, who was upon his guard against suspicion, took care to look as much as possible like one of the mob ; to have shaved and washed very often, or appeared frequently in clean linen might have attracted the attention of the police, and it was as dangerous to be a *muscadin*, as a royalist, and prudent men took care that no word, no sigh, no look, no article of dress, no remnant of an-

cient civility and decorum should expose them to the fatal accusation of being either. Propriety of dress is however recovering, though but slowly, its proper ascendancy in society. The red cap, the short coarse jacket, and the affectation of being ragged and dirty, have long disappeared ; but the boots and pantaloons, the cropped hair, the round hat, and the shoe strings are still to be seen, and even sometimes, though rarely, of an evening, and in what is now called good company.\* The emperor, however, is too sagacious not to know of how much importance these seeming trifles are, that they are connected with good manners, and that good manners are the outworks of that sort of morality, which is essential to order and obedience. Even in America, where every man will always, I hope, be free to do all that the law has not forbidden, I could almost wish we had a censor to regulate dress ; I would not permit the desire of being at one's ease to prevail so powerfully, or suffer that wholesome restraint, upon which the morals of our country depend far more than upon the law, to be in any degree relaxed. If we suffer people to go on consulting their ease, the decencies of society will be lost one by one ; it will be thought a mark of slavery, as among

\* The Baron de Grimm, whose very entertaining work I have seen for the first time long since these letters were written, has some very good ideas upon this subject (see vol. xiv, 1786.) It is singular, that a man of his penetration should not have discovered symptoms of the revolution, then so near, in that contempt of ancient manners, and customs, and that disregard of dress he was so struck with.

the Turks, to go with the head uncovered ; we shall be for shaking off the restraint of this, or of the other garment in hot weather, and we shall revert by degrees to the dress or rather undress of our aboriginal ancestors.\* Kersimeres and velverets from Manchester are, as I observed to you; universally worn by the men ; the ladies also make use of several articles of English manufactory, and these, with a great variety of other prohibited articles, are openly sold in large warehouses. The smuggler, or rather the vender of these, has no doubt an understanding with the revenue officer ; and the government, which neglects no means of raising money, contrives to be paid perhaps for what it cannot possibly prevent. The wonder is, that burdened as the prohibited article must be with a considerable expense in addition to the first cost, it should still be sold at a less price than it can be made for in France, where labour is so cheap, and where the government has in many instances encouraged the manufacturer with the gift of some old convent, as at Annecy in Savoy, and patronized his industry by rendering his productions fashionable. Perhaps the law which leaves the rate of interest open to the agreement of the parties contracting, and the obscure but profitable manner to the lender in which the

\* I have often smiled to myself, says Lady W. Montague in viewing our assemblies at Louverie, the gentlemen being all in light night caps and night gowns, under which I am told they wear no other garments, and the ladies in their stays, and smock sleeves tied with ribbands, and a single lutestring petticoat. It is true this dress is called *Vestimenti di confidenza*.

treasury continues to borrow, and the conscription which renders it impossible that any young man should remain long enough at his trade to be expert at it, and the irregular, inconsistent conduct of the government, which frequently rewards some service or gratifies the importunity of a courtier, by a permission to import to a certain amount of foreign merchandise, joined to the precipitation with which certain articles are either prohibited or admitted, without any interval being allowed between the date and the operation of an edict; and the deficiency of canals, which have been so multiplied in England, are so many reasons which combine to defeat the advantages that nature has given France over almost every other country in the world.

I found the article which we call Queens-ware dearer within a few miles of where it is manufactured near Geneva, than the English merchant sells it in Charleston.\*

The ladies were obliged also to do homage during the horrors of the revolution to the monsters of the day, but they have since returned to all that taste and elegance for which they were formerly so conspicuous, they even dress in a more becoming manner than ever, for the fashion is more strictly Grecian than it used to be, and rouge is worn to imitate nature, and not as formerly in large patches upon the cheek as a badge of rank and fashion.

\* English coals are sold cheaper at Marseilles, Arthur Young says, than they can be furnished for from a distance of about five miles from the city.



There may be some exaggeration in what we are told of the depravity of manners in Paris during a considerable period of the revolution ; but it must still have been very great, for the mob were of too much importance not to be courted by the different parties, and we may easily conceive of what nature the means of seduction were ; every licentious passion was gratified by the facility of procuring a divorce, the restraint of religion was withdrawn, and the multiplicity of theatres, which were all of them accessible on very easy terms, joined to the depreciation of money, and the fluctuation of property, must have encouraged idleness and debauchery in the extreme. What the reality may be at present, I cannot pretend to say, but there was not the least appearance of immorality in what I saw of society in Paris ; the greatest appearance of decorum, on the contrary, was every where apparent, and particularly in the air and behaviour of the young and unmarried among the ladies. They have even at balls a gravity, I might almost say a severity of manner, which had it been the test of propriety in Philadelphia during the revolutionary war, as I presume it now is in Paris, might have rendered the question of an old acquaintance of mine, who acted as manager at a ball, ~~more~~ less ludicrous than Chatellux has represented it, when he asked a young lady, if she thought she had come there for her amusement ? A Parisian young lady does, certainly, not strike one at a ball as having come there for her amusement ; she makes a decent

but studied exhibition of herself, and appears like a person engaged in a very arduous design.

To the convents of former times have succeeded boarding-schools, where young ladies remain until they are married, or until the period of youth is entirely passed. The greatest attention is paid in these seminaries to their education, though chiefly perhaps to the ornamental parts, and dancing is become almost a science. One might indeed almost suppose of this elegant accomplishment that it would ultimately attain the degree of dignity and importance it was formerly accompanied with, and become once more a serious and essential part of every publick ceremony. Our ancestors in Europe probably lived at one period as the Indians of our western country do now, and with them we know that no war is declared, no ambassador received, no peace concluded, without a dance; no step, no figure, no motion of the hand and arms is without its meaning, they all refer to what has been performed,\* or is yet to be effected; and the whole is designed to excite those passions and those feelings in the warrior and the statesman, which may lead to honour and distinction. An eminent dancing master, whom I frequently had occasion to see, has assured me, that there were steps which, to be perfectly well executed would require two or three hours of daily practice for at least two years; he allowed, however, that a young lady's time might be perhaps as well employed in

\* See Williams's History of Vermont; a book too little known in America.

some other acquisition, and that dancing had lost some of its charms in losing all its gayety.

The persons who do the honours of Paris to a stranger, are generally the bankers; the principal of these have taken the station in society of the farmers-general of former times; and composing a sort of monied aristocracy, they appear to enjoy the advantages to be derived from opulence, now no longer exposed as that of their predecessors was, to be envied by the landed interest, or hated by the people, to whom a display of ostentatious luxury gave offence, when it was supposed, and not without reason, to be connected with, and to aggravate the general distress. There is a certain equality which despotism is as productive of as republicanism, and which is of a nature to console a great part of mankind, and particularly the class alluded to, for the privation of every political right. The rich were never before fully admitted to the rank and estimation which wealth ought in reason and good policy to give. I do not believe that the present rich have as yet the affectation of encouraging literature which was so honourable to the farmers-general; many of whom were at the same time so distinguished as men of letters, that Plutus, it was said, must have made up his quarrel with the Muses, who had so long spoken contemptuously of him. There are houses, however, at which a weekly dinner is given to literary men; but as the sciences now most in vogue are too abstruse for general conversation, as there are no great contests, as formerly, between the king and the different parliaments, which all could dis-

cuss, and as that spirit, which notwithstanding the danger of the Bastile, and of Lettres de Cachet, could vent itself in epigrams, is now effectually laid, a literary dinner must be a very inferiour thing to what it used to be; the hour of dining is indeed so late, and the custom of going to some place of publick amusement of an evening, still so prevalent, that there can be but little or no conversation. The supper of former times, the triumph of French manners and festivity, has disappeared, and in the room of it they have introduced an ambiguous meal, which, from some resemblance it bears to an evening party in England is called a "thé." This takes place at a very late hour, and is a sort of irregular cold supper, which some take standing, and others at different tables, so that nothing like general conversation can possibly take place, nor is there any appearance of festivity.

The distance at which we were from France during the revolution concealed from our knowledge a great many of the horrors which accompanied it, but it also kept us ignorant of some follies, and you may never have heard, perhaps, that there was a time during the power of Robespierre in Paris, when every one was obliged for a certain number of days to place his table in the street and eat by the side of his neighbour; the object of the rich man was to conceal his opulence, to have as bad a dinner, and to drink as ordinary wine as he knew how to order, while the person who sat next to him was consuming perhaps the price of a whole week's labour, that his misery might not appear.

It was impossible, notwithstanding the passive obedience of the people, that such an experiment should be often repeated, without occasioning discontent ; the brotherhood which it excited between neighbours was too much, as some one observed at the time, like the brotherhood of Cain and Abel, and the government, pretending that the enemies of the republick were about converting these fraternal repasts into seditious meetings, suddenly put a stop to them. Good eating was always well understood in France. See what Arthur Young says in his comparison between an English and a French table. But the sudden opulence of obscure people during the ferment of the revolution, the destruction of every distinction in society, but what is strictly personal, the scenes of misery and distress which the nation was for so long a time exposed to, and a degree of uncertainty as to the permanence of the present order of things, have been all so many additional incentives to luxury ; which, if I am to rely upon the information of others rather than upon my own experience, is carried (and particularly in the articles of eating and drinking) far beyond the knowledge of all former times. A very well written book called the *Almanach des Gourmands* has been published for some time in yearly volumes, which contains all the erudition that the subject admits of ; indicating very gravely where the best articles of every sort are to be had, and how they are to be dressed, and how the sensuality of a guest is to be carried far beyond the vulgar boundaries of natural appetite, and how he is at length to be dismissed to

his digestion. With a great deal of wit and humour the author knows how to give a dignity to trifles, and speak of a new dish, as Herschel might of a new Planet ; a well furnished kitchen becomes a temple sacred to the better purposes of social life, of which the cook is as it were the high-priest. A great deal of the business of human life is no doubt connected with the science of cookery, but our author carries it very far indeed ; he even pretends that children might receive their best lessons of natural history and geography at table, in being called upon to give an account of the vegetables, and of the various dishes before them, a fish from Geneva, a pye from the southern provinces, and a goose from Strasburg, would carry them in imagination over a great part of France, and the history of a good dessert would extend to the East and West Indies.

It would be better, perhaps, if something not quite so learned indeed, and yet a little more like conversation, took place at table ; but one effect of the revolution has been to render the nation more reserved and silent, and infinitely less social ; it has also had some effect upon their manners in publick places, where a young man will now remain seated and with his hat on, though a lady is standing near him, and where the circumstance of being a stranger is far from commanding that respect and attention it once did, and still does out of Paris. Somewhat of a more sullen and selfish turn very generally prevails, where people are not called upon by the rules of good company to make an effort to the contrary, and it may be traced, I think, in the nature of all

those improvements which are conspicuous in Paris; they are generally such as a man may enjoy by himself, and all that can invite to a life of celibacy is extremely multiplied, and more seducing than ever. It happens, however, that a very different effect, to appearance, has sprung from the same cause. With all the additional incentives to selfish enjoyment, there is certainly an appearance of domestick happiness, which was not so conspicuous formerly; a man now leads his wife into a room, and ventures to speak to her, and even sometimes to sit by her side, without rendering himself ridiculous.

I never heard a single person speak of the revolution, which is now considered as over, but in terms of reprehension; even the emperor, if we are to believe Monsieur Carayon Nisas,\* one of the grossest flatterers among the tribunes, has been heard to wish, that it had never taken place; nor is there any restraint to the style of invective and ridicule with which the first promoters of it are mentioned. La Harpe, whose work is one of the few which do much honour to French literature, of those that have been published for the last twelve or fifteen years, speaks of Brissot and

\* I have been told by a person, who had it from one who was present on the occasion, that this gentleman, Carayon Nisas, having attended with many others to pay his court on the evening of the coronation, was asked by the new Emperor, how the people seemed to be affected by the ceremony of the day? they are in raptures, Sire, said the tribune bowing low, and are felicitating themselves on the auspicious events, which has just occurred. Je sais que tu en as menti, was the answer, mais ça m'est égal.

of the first republicans, and of their madness in provoking the resentment of all Europe, in order to exalt the imagination, and work upon the passions of the French people, in terms that surprised me extremely, terms very remote indeed from the language of those who are considered as the friends of the French in America. "They invented phantoms, says he to alarm the pride and wound the feelings of the nation."

"A conference at Pilnitz which had no other object but to protect the sovereigns who were more immediately in danger from the political crusade of France, was artfully converted into a conspiracy, and particulars of the pretended agreement for the division of the republick were published as if derived from the most authentick information. Posterity will speak with contempt of his imaginary treaty of Pilnitz, of this stupid falsehood, which was so long made an instrument to impose upon the credulity of mankind; and history will bear witness that no power had either the will, or thought it their interest to attack us, and that those, who, for our sins, and to the misfortunes of mankind, were at the head of the government, were afraid of nothing so much as of the nation's being left to its own reflections."

The age immediately proceeding the revolution was fertile in literary men of eminence, Fontenelle, who brought the sciences into polite life, may be said to have belonged to it, and it claims without dispute the names of Montesquieu, of Buffon, of Voltaire, of D'Alembert, and of Con-



dillac,\* who explained to his countrymen what Locke had written; besides Hénault,† Raynal, Rousseau, and an hundred others. But the revolution has been favourable to a particular description of talents only, whilst it has proved fatal to every other, and even to the philosophers, as some of the most distinguished men of letters were called, who first promoted it, and who with all the unthinkingness of the clown in Hogarth, who is sawing down the sign post that supports him, blindly removed the props of law, religion, and morality, and were themselves crushed in the ruin that ensued. Their zeal for the poor and oppressed, their satires against the religious estab-

\* Condillac, in levelling the metaphysics of Locke to the comprehension of his countrymen, did them, says Mad. de Stael, an irreparable injury. It is an illustration of the parable of the sower.

Those principles of philosophy which could be safely discussed in England, were eagerly embraced in France, and for the worst of purposes. If external objects are the cause of all our sensations, said the libertine, if the physical is allowed to assume an entire dominion over the moral constitution, the organization of individuals must be the sole cause of any difference in their characters, the power of volition is fatality after all, and it is unjust to attribute to ourselves any thing blamable or meritorious. Nor did this perversion of Locke's metaphysics stop here, "for the System of Nature," as the profligate work of Lamettrie was entitled, went to the annihilation of man's free will, and to the rejection of all proof of the divine existence. I knew nothing more eloquent and more expressive of an honest affectionate heart, and a clear head, than the chapter of Mad. de Stael from which this note is extracted.

*See de L' Allemagne par M. de Stael.*

† The President Henault, a very distinguished literary character, ought not to be implicated, in the charge of assailing the religion of his country. See a most excellent letter from him to Voltaire in the collection of Mad. du Deffand's letters.

lishment of the country, and against religion itself, their ridicule so lavishly expended upon courts and princes, and all that was great and noble ; all these, which were so many claims upon the public consideration in times of popular commotion, could not save them. They have either fallen victims to the comprehensive cruelty of Robespierre, or having fled to foreign countries, are now called upon to repay with flattery the permission of being allowed to return home.

It was perceivable at a very early date from the debates of the national assembly, that the distinguished orators who had sunk before their enemies left behind them no rivals for talents at least, or for general information. And the subsequent debates which have been published often contain allusions to Roman and Grecian history, which are founded in ignorance and mistake. They sometimes tell us of those democrats, Cato and Brutus, who, in the quarrels of their country were certainly no democrats ; and a great deal has been more than once said of the scaffold of Cataline, whom every schoolboy knows to have died in a different manner ; and I could mention some gross errors in geography. There has appeared of late, however, a more candid and liberal historian in Lacretelle than one would suppose the present time admitted of ; the Abbè de Lisle has distinguished himself by a translation of Milton, and by another of Virgil ; and the author of the Studies of Nature, and of Paul and Virginia is still alive. Lacepede too remains ; but the suc-

cessor of Buffon is lost in the chancellor of the legion of honour. There are chemists, botanists, astronomers, natural historians, and above all, civil and military engineers ; but there is no prospect of another literary generation, like that of the last years of the monarchy, for there are no similar means of education ; the colleges and academies of those times have disappeared ; the central schools, which might have diffused some knowledge among the people at large, have each of them been converted into a lycæum, the internal constitution of which is entirely military. What Alexander did with the thirty thousand youths whom he selected, as Plutarch tells us, in his way through a part of his conquests, Bonaparte seems desirous of effecting with the whole rising generation of the French nation. Boys who are taught very little Latin, who hear a great deal of mathematics, with some geography, and arithmetick ; who learn nothing of religion, history, or moral philosophy, and acquire no modern language but their own ; who are divided into companies, have their officers, wear a uniform, assemble by beat of drum, and go through the manual exercise as regularly as in a garrison ; who live coarsely, and without any attention being paid to their morals in private, who are punished for offences against the discipline of the school by imprisonment within the bare walls, and upon the naked floor of a dungeon ; such boys, I say, will scarcely be fit for any thing but a military life. Ninety-eight hundredths of the nation meanwhile remain ignorant of the

arts of reading and writing, and as these last seem only calculated to furnish soldiers, who are to be officered from some lycæum, the whole nation rapidly assumes the appearance of a great military establishment.\* How such a force, under the absolute control and skilful direction of an ambitious, unfeeling, vindictive mind, may be next employed, must be a subject of serious apprehension. One might almost compare him to those supernatural powers that Milton speaks of ;

————— of which the least could wield  
Those elements, and arm him with the force  
Of all their regions.

Power, says Johnson, which only the control of Omnipotence restrains from laying creation waste, and filling the vast extent of space with ruin and confusion. It is a fortunate circumstance that the ocean flows between him and us, as an ingenious member of congress once observed, and who ended with a prayer in which all America would, I believe, join, if necessary, that it might long continue to do so—for it is certain that this great conqueror does not love us. He, like the rest of the nation, confounds us with the people which has proved the great barrier to his ambition, and he hates us for something inveterately English in our character ; for our republican form of government, our commercial spirit, our wish to remain neutral, our liber-

\* ————— felix prædo

Terrarum fatale malum fulmenque quod omnes  
Percuteret pariter populos ; et sidus iniquum  
Gentibus,

*Lucan.*

might well be applied to Bonaparte.

ty of the press, and all those laws and customs which we derive from the parent state.\* He hates us for not consenting to be the instruments of his ambition, and with a degree of frankness, which, in such a person, can arise only from contempt, he makes no secret of it; nay, I should not be surprised if, when he shall have settled the affairs of the continent of Europe, he were to make the same proposal to England in the execution of some hostile design against us, which one of the rival kings does in Shakspeare at the siege of Angiers. He once thought so little of the resistance to be expected at St. Domingo, that the army after halting there for a few weeks, were to proceed to Louisiana, and thence he was to assail Canada in another war with England, intending, as he declared, to render the Americans very useful in the prosecution of his designs, and resolved, if they gave him the least trouble, to throw the United States into the sea; and what will surprize you in a person of his sort, this declaration was made at a publick levee. The national institute has taken the place of the four academies which existed formerly, and may no doubt in time promote a taste for literature in society; but as yet the diffusion of such knowledge as I could appreciate has been very slight indeed.† It is not unusual to meet with per-

\* It will be observed that some years have elapsed since the above passage was written. We have since very fully exculpated ourselves, and he has declared his love for us very strongly.

† On parle tant de l'abbaye de Chesapeake, said a Count Abbé during the war of the American Revolution, qu'il faut que ce soit un bon bénéfice, et si Monsieur de Rochambeau a du succès, j'irai la Reine de la demander pour moi au Congrès.

*Le Duc de Levis.*

sons among the French, and even in good company, who are singularly ignorant of the history and customs, and even the local situation of all countries but their own. I have known a Frenchman in Charleston, and one tolerably well informed on many topicks, and a man of great sagacity, confound our sister state of Georgia with the Georgia of the Euxine, and express his astonishment that the Turks, whom he had read of in his youth, should send so far for their women; he had been himself at Savannah, and could therefore judge, and did not think theirs at all handsomer than those of St. Domingo. I have been asked too, by a very well-dressed, well-behaved man, whether the United States were upon an island, and whether it was necessary in coming thence to pass through England in order to get to France. Numbers who are little better informed, confounded us with the people of the West Indies, and some I really believe with those of the East, and they are generally in total ignorance of our government. A stranger in search of information on the arts and sciences would receive a degree of instruction in Paris which our country is very far indeed from producing; but he would be struck with the superiour knowledge on questions of law, and government, and perhaps of geography, among the people of America, where a person who occupies but a humble station in life is occasionally called upon to fill some of its most important functions.

There was something in the conduct of the commissioners sent to France by Mr. Adams in the time

of the Directory, and in the spirit and firmness of the president himself, supported by the zealous and unanimous declaration of the people, that raised for a time our national character extremely. It has since, however, subsided, and we are blamed for our indecisive, pusillanimous conduct. We manifest an inclination to injure, it is said, and are yet afraid to strike ; we are full of whining and lamentation towards the greater powers, whilst with regard to Spain, which may be considered as in its decrepitude, we act the part of the ass's colt towards the dying lion. A great many anecdotes too are remembered of our fraudulent sales of land, and of families prevailed upon to quit Paris in the hope of plenty upon easy terms in some happier region, who have afterwards found themselves exposed to all the bitterness of want in unwholesome climates, or fallen victims to the inveterate hostility of the native Indians. We are, in short, with the far greater part of the French nation but what the Chinese call a race of second chop Englishmen.\*

\* *Apropos de Socrate, says Mad. du Deffand, nous avons ici un Comte de Paar qui parle lentement et par fois avec un certain air de reflection : Il disoit l'autre jour chez le président, quel est ce Socrif, qui s'empoisonna en mangeant, ou buvant des cigales ? il me semble avoir entendu parler de lui.*

I have left this passage as it originally stood, for it contains a faithful representation of what the American character had fallen to, but I am delighted at the opportunity afforded me of testifying my gratitude to those brave men, who by land and by sea, have vindicated the honour of our common country in the late glorious and memorable contest ; glorious for the display of courage under the guidance of skill, and tempered by humanity, and memorable by affording a new era in the policy of the United States. And yet never was the safety of a nation more dangerously trifled with, and never did a first magistrate stand more in need of the defence Mr. Necker makes, when he represents

Among the few persons of great literary reputation whom I had an opportunity of seeing in Paris, was the celebrated Miss Williams, whom Boswell speaks so handsomely of in his life of Johnson. She has very evident remains of beauty, is polite, and receives her company on particular evenings in a spacious room, which is very fancifully decorated.

himself as dragged by a force he could not resist, towards a precipice he could not avoid. Had Bonaparte succeeded in Russia, he would have regulated at his caprice the subsequent destinies of Europe, and it might have been well for our government to have calculated the probable consequences of such an event, before they determined to divert a portion of those resources, that were to assist in repelling him. A great many injuries and indignities had been endured from England, almost half as many as from France perhaps, and one occasion in particular for honourable war had occurred, in which all America had experienced but one sentiment ; nothing, however, could provoke us to hostility, and some years of ill humour succeeded, during which we had nearly ruined ourselves for the chance of injuring our adversary, acting, in that respect like a child, who quarrels with his dinner, and pouts in a corner, or like the idiot Boswell speaks of, who used to sleep all night upon the bridge, when he wanted to plague his neighbours. Now certainly war with all its evils, was preferable to this, as dying in battle is better than suicide ; but Heaven, which, in its justice, as Shakspeare says,

—————Can of our pleasant vices  
Make instruments to scourge us,

can also in its mercy, make our very blindness and impolicy the secondary causes of honour and prosperity. Never was war more rashly undertaken, or the ostensible object more entirely lost sight of at a peace, than in the late instance, and there were symptoms of rapidly approaching distress, that could not have been long concealed ; but a glorious opportunity has been afforded the American people of proving their fidelity to the government of their choice, however administered ; we have learnt the secret of our strength too, and despising hereafter, it is to be hoped, the miserable expedients of embargoes and commercial restrictions, and the paralyzing system of defence by gunboats, we shall honourably maintain that station, which we have proudly assumed among the nations of the earth.



The walls are entirely covered with various authors in all languages, but this lettered uniformity is broken by pilasters at regular distances, on a projection from which are very handsome lamps, and at the foot of each is a flourishing cedar in an ornamental vase. Some circumstance or other, perhaps the reading of theoretical books on government, the boards of which were stamped with daggers and caps of liberty, like those which Mr. Hollis sent over Europe, gave this lady a very decided partiality in favour of the French nation at the commencement of the revolution, nor did she cease to praise and to palliate their conduct, and to promote what she termed their most sacred cause, till the last important change proved too much for all her ingenuity, and even for all her partiality. She is now satisfied to be silent, and speaks of that golden dream of liberty which, for a time, amused the imaginations of her friends the Girondists, like a person rendered prudent by experience, but with what seemed to me, to be marks of very deep regret. Her last work is a collection of letters written by some of the late royal family during their confinement in the temple, and chiefly by the king, to whose mental powers she does justice, while she accuses him of dissimulation, and indirectly makes him the author of all the horrors that ensued. I have heard Mr. Necker say, that these letters were not genuine, but with all due respect for Mr. Necker's judgment, it would be difficult not to yield to that evidence of their authenticity which arises from the sentiments they breathe, and from the stamp of

an enlightened mind, and yet kind hearted, and unresisting character, which distinguished Louis XVI. At all events, Miss Williams, we are to suppose, believed them to be genuine, and the difficulty is to comprehend how a woman, and a woman who can speak the language of tenderness and sensibility upon other occasions, should have proved herself upon this, so cruelly devoid of all sympathy for distress. Had she confined herself to the text of these letters, even disfigured as they are in a rather incorrect English translation, the publication, though distressing to those who feel for the late royal family of France, might not have deserved blame ; but she has thought proper to accompany every letter with notes and observations, in which the intentions of the king and his friends are misstated, and his expressions perverted. She seems, in short to have delighted in numbering the sighs and groans of the unhappy monarch, and joyfully to riot in his doubts and discouragement, in his desolation and despair. All the nonsense too, which has been alleged of the queen by her enemies, and believed by the ignorant alone, is alluded to in this publication as true ; and yet if Miss Williams could but know, what the malevolence of Paris accuses herself of, the circumstances to which it attributes her safety during the revolution, and the motives to which it, falsely as I am convinced, ascribes her present residence, she might be more careful how she insulted the memory of an unfortunate family.

In addition to the acquaintances which our letters procured us in Paris, we had the advantage of being

frequently at the house of general Armstrong, whose kindness and hospitality I can never forget; and we lived in some degree of intimacy with the family of Mr. Bowdoin, of Boston, who is appointed to the court of Madrid, but is detained in Paris, by some circumstance of publick business. An American ambassadour derives satisfaction, it is to be hoped, from filling an exalted station in a foreign country, and from a consciousness of the service that he renders, for his situation is in many respects an unpleasant one. He is frequently called upon to transact business which his former pursuits in life have not probably prepared him for, and he is obliged to live at an expense which, from the scantiness of the provision made by law, must encroach upon his private fortune. We met with several young Americans also, whose time might have been better passed, perhaps, in some provincial town, where they could have gone into company and have acquired the language; advantages which, singular as it may seem, are not to be enjoyed at Paris, but with more exertion and more philosophy than very young men are generally capable of; it is too much their custom to live together, and in a circle of idle amusements. Among them were some who travelled with American passports; but whom I knew by their air, and manner of expressing themselves, to be Englishmen, and in all probability commercial agents, or as they are commonly called, riders. As the police forms a much more correct judgment in these cases than I can pretend to, and as there was no doubt of the fact, the probability is, that the in-

dividuals in question were in Paris by special license, and had paid largely for it. The real Americans were principally from the southern states, and generally very young men. It is surely a mistake in the English and Americans to send their sons at so early a period of life into foreign countries; they may, perhaps, becoming satiated with what is commonly called pleasure, and tired of being ever on the footing of strangers, be the more satisfied ever after, to remain quietly at home; but whether these and the few other advantages which can possibly arise from such early travels, can make amends for the risk that is run, and the time that is taken up, and the money that is sacrificed, is very doubtful. Among the southerners there were some Virginians, and it will be interesting to trace the effect hereafter of this taste for travelling upon those who, though strong in numbers, and distinguished by their talents, owe a great part of their influence in publick affairs to a sort of national character. People who never enjoy the amusements of society in cities, who consider their citizens as the tallest, their state as the largest, and its natural characteristics as the most stupendous in America; who govern several of the neighbouring states by the colonies they have sent out, who have their university within their own jurisdiction, and who have furnished from among them our greatest general, and our most distinguished philosopher and author, to say nothing of our present first magistrate, whom they so universally think highly of,—such people, I say, very naturally assume an ascendancy, which

is not easily resisted. It will be a long time before the foreign polish, which they seem at length desirous of acquiring, will have any visible effect, and before they lose somewhat of that loftiness of mind which is founded upon so many circumstances, which acquires strength upon the solitary domain of a planter, and which learns to aid itself with the powers of popular eloquence in the tumultuous assembly of a county court. I should not be surprised if the Virginians, in losing somewhat of their native roughness, should also lose a portion of their energy, and consequently of their preponderance in our national councils.\*

We were at two or three private balls in Paris, where you would have been pleased with the dancing, and with the elegant simplicity which distinguished the dress of the young ladies. In America, a mother makes every sacrifice to the appearance of a daughter, and attaches but little importance to her own; in Paris it is quite the contrary. Feathers, lace, jewels, and rouge are for the mother, while the daughter in white, of muslin or of crape, with a wreath of flowers in the hair, and a string of artificial pearls around the neck, is sufficiently dressed for any occasion whatsoever. The restraint to which a lady in France is subjected, lasts till she is

\* What Madame de Stael says of Germany might, with a very little alteration, be applicable to Virginia.

Une Grande Ville, qui serviroit de point de ralliement seroit utile à l'Allemagne pour rassembler les moyens d'Etude, &c.

Mais si cette capitale développait chez les Allemands le goût des plaisirs de la société dans toute leur élégance, ils y perdroient peut-être cette indépendance audacieuse qui les distingue—they changeroient leurs habitudes contre des manières dont ils n'acquerraient jamais les grâces et la dextérité.

married, but her freedom then operates like a spring, that has been violently compressed. It is now time that I should finish this letter, in which I thought to have comprised all that I had to say of Paris, but I hope in my next to set you down at Nantes.

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## LETTER LXXIII.

MY DEAR E——,

WE sometimes meet with persons who had served in America during our revolutionary war, and heard a great deal of the melancholy fate of others. D'Estaigne, Custine, and Dillon terminated their days at the guillotine, and the end of the Marquis de la Rouarie, whom we knew by the name of Armand, though more obscure, was not less calamitous. Like others of his rank he had carried back with him to France ideas of civil and political liberty, or at least a zeal for some (perhaps not well defined or well understood) improvement in the government, which contributed to the troubles of '89 ; but he soon afterwards regretted the part that he had taken, entered into a correspondence with the exiled princes, and was the great spring of that fermentation which showed itself at no early period in Brittany, and ended in what is called the war of the Chouans. The whole history of this extraordinary man might well deserve the pen of some good writer ; his early attachment in Paris to a dancer of the opera, who had too much honour, too much respect for the noble

family of her lover, to consent to marry him ; his attempt to poison himself, his life of penitence and mortification at La Trappe, where he was discovered by accident, his flight to America, his services there, his return to France, and the subsequent events which partake equally of romance and tragedy, might form the subject of a very interesting volume. Disappointed in his expectations of foreign succour, restrained from commencing his operations by the orders of the court at Coblenz, living in woods and marshes in continued danger of being taken, and affected at the death of the king with more than common affliction, he fell dangerously ill, and was compelled to ask shelter at the castle of Laguyomaraire, near Lamballe. He knew the political principles of the family, and was personally known to them, but wishing, in case of the worst, not to expose them to the penalty of the law, he claimed hospitality and received it under a fictitious name. His illness soon proved fatal, he died, and was buried in a neighbouring wood. Unfortunately a wretch, who had followed him as a servant for many years, thought himself injured by the family of the castle ; they would not give up to him some effects of his late master, until they could be justified for so doing by the nearest relation ; and he in revenge went privately to a neighbouring magistrate and betrayed the whole affair. If this sad history were ever written, the attention of the reader would be as much excited by the events which followed as by those which preceded the death of Armand. The whole family of Laguyomaraire was destroyed ; the

husband, the wife, the daughter, the daughter's husband, the preceptor, and two or three old and faithful servants were conveyed to Paris and there executed; and with them was a young lady of the name of Desille, accused of having secreted some important papers relative to the conspiracy in Brittany; having been mistaken for her sister, the person meant by the informer, she left the revolutionary tribunal, not as yet become familiar to scenes of cruelty and injustice, in their mistake, and died with all the resignation and tranquillity of a martyr.\* I saw Kosciusco, who served with reputation against Burgoyne, and in South Carolina, and who has since acted so distinguished a part in Poland; he lives in the outskirts of Paris in the family of a friend whose children play about him, and here he reads the newspapers, and cultivates his garden, and smokes his cigar, forgetting the world as much as possible, and striving, I really believe, to be forgotten. The sight of Kosciusco reminded me of his friend and countryman Pulawski, whom I had known during our revolutionary war; and to whose merit, as I look back upon what I remember to have been the opinion of those times, I do not think we did justice. What appeared rashness to us,

\* The magistrate whose zeal was fatal to so many victims on this occasion, was a man of ferocious republicanism, but of great courage and of some art. Knowing with certainty that the papers of La Ronarie had been carried to the mansion of the Desilles and buried in the garden, he was determined, after a fruitless search, to make the ladies of the family walk over every part of it, and observing a certain alteration in their looks, at a particular spot, he dug and found the papers. He was shortly after under some pretext or other dragged away to Paris himself, and perished at the guillotine.



was a well placed confidence in his knowledge of the partisan war, and in his own personal prowess. In mixed companies, and in a drawing room, there was something of awkwardness, I had almost said of timidity, in his manners and appearance, but on horseback, and at the head of his corps, he had the air of the God Mars. Rulhiere has given an account of this distinguished family of Pulawski in his late work on Poland. You would be struck with the resemblance in some circumstances between the old Pulawski, as he was called in the papers of the day, and the elder Brutus in Roman history. There was the same forbearance for years under injuries and insults, the same fearless exertion afterward, and the same devotedness in death to the cause of the republick.

I also saw La Fayette, whose character having been at one time elevated far beyond its intrinsic merit, has been since as unjustly decried. His object was probably never well defined even to himself, but that he meant the good of his country, connected indeed with his own exaltation, is not, I think, to be doubted. What the effect of the revolution will ultimately be to France, we are yet to learn, but to him it has been certainly productive of every ill. It has robbed him of rank, fortune, and friends, and has subjected him to exile, to imprisonment, and to disgrace. He nevertheless looks better than when I knew him many years ago, during the war, and has an air of tranquillity, and I should say of contentment, if I thought it possible, for he cannot but have some bitter moments; moments during which reflections must force them-

selves upon him, not unlike those of Calista in the play, who sees her lover lifeless at her feet, who hears that her father is mortally wounded, and who now bewails those evils which her crimes and fatal follies had occasioned. His circumstances, which are far from being affluent, have been in some measure improved by the generous gratitude of the United States, but his friends will regret that he did not feel himself above accepting the bounty of the present government of France. The remnant of his estate furnishes him a farm to live upon about thirty miles from Paris, and he has there the comfort and satisfaction of being surrounded by a numerous and affectionate family. He speaks with great regard of America, and both he and Madame de la Fayette appear to entertain the strongest sentiments of gratitude towards Mr. Huger and Dr. Bolman, who so rashly but so gallantly attempted to rescue him. His confinement at Olmutz was not in a dungeon; it was upon the ground floor in a room which opened upon the court of the castle, and he was treated with more distinction and tenderness by far than his fellow prisoners, he was the only one allowed to take exercise out of the castle, until the attempt to rescue him. His memoirs, if he were ever to publish them, would be scarcely less romantick, and still more interesting perhaps than those of Armand, and I wish that he may one day publish them, for I like him well enough to wish that he could exculpate himself from two or three charges which still affect his character, even supposing we allowed of his good intentions, and suffered them to operate in

his defence, for the evils which have flowed from his rash undertakings. I cannot believe that he was acquainted with, and still less that he intentionally promoted the flight to Varennes; but it is probable that the little numberless, mortifying restraints which he unnecessarily imposed upon the royal family, at the Tuileries, contributed to impel them to that fatal step; and it is certain, that the queen used to assert to the last moments of her life, that he was the only person upon earth whom she could not forgive. It is singular, that of all the various parties which have succeeded each other in France, no one has expressed itself satisfied with the conduct of La Fayette. It is inconceivable how he came to suppose himself capable of conducting the whole French nation, as he might have conducted a brigade of troops, directing them how to wheel, and where to stop; that he should not have discovered, that he was the instrument of designing men, who instead of suffering him to lead, only permitted him to march first, and that as long as he should go in the direction they wished; and it is equally inconceivable that he should have reposed in full confidence on the attachment of soldiers, who had been seduced from their allegiance by money. With the personal courage of a subaltern, who leads a forlorn hope, he wanted decision in moments of emergency. His officers who perceived this, had already left him in numbers, when he was himself obliged to fly from that army, which but a few weeks before he might have marched to Paris. If he was right, he was not enough so, and

if criminal, it was his fate to be criminal only by halves ; his conduct reminds me, in short of what Hume applies to the Duke of Norfolk in queen Elizabeth's time : " when men of good principles, he observes, engage in dangerous enterprises, they are too apt to balance between the execution of their designs, and their remorse, the fear of punishment and the hope of pardon, till they deprive themselves of all means of effective defence, and become an easy prey to their enemies."

You will say, perhaps, that I do not speak as advantageously as I ought of our old friend the Marquis ; but his conduct was perhaps never strictly proper ; and with respect to America, I do not think it will be approved hereafter, when passion shall have given way to reason. He had made every preparation for an excursion to Greece and Asia Minor in '76, when it was accidentally suggested to him that he might serve his country and acquire reputation by taking part with the Americans. Animated by the hostility of a Frenchman towards the ancient rivals of his nation, his object was to render the breach irreparable between the colonies and the mother country ; nor will it be hereafter thought otherwise of him than of any adventurer, who, availing himself of the discontent which is said to be lurking in Louisiana, were to exhort the people of that country not to submit to the sale that has been made of them, not to be transferred like a flock of sheep, and were to furnish them with the means of successful resistance to the government of the United States.

Notwithstanding the change of behaviour which is upon some occasions perceivable, the French are in society the same good-humoured people they ever were, and well-behaved, though not of manners so refined as formerly. It is never thought necessary to introduce to each other persons who meet together in the same drawing-room, or at the same table, and nothing perhaps could better prove the general discretion which prevails in all companies. The last play, the opera, the different performers, some new novel, or some great event, all knowledge of which is built upon the bulletin of the day, furnish a great abundance of topics. The French are more generally than they used to be in the custom of learning foreign languages, and the residence of so many exiled families in England during the late war, has rendered it not uncommon to hear English well spoken in mixed companies. I feel that I have given you a very imperfect account of this great capital and its inhabitants; but there are books without end from which the deficiency may be supplied; of these I know none so useful as Arthur Young's tour. He gives us no list indeed of pictures, and of statues, of palaces and churches to be seen, but he has marked with all the sagacity of an experienced observer, a variety of little circumstances, which distinguish the two great rival powers of Europe, and has traced the rise and progress of the revolution, pointing out the weakness and indecision of the one party, and the blind, headlong fury of the other, better than any one I know of. It has seldom been my good fortune to follow pre-

cisely the same course that he did, but I had now the pleasure of having him in some sense as a companion as we were rolling along the great road that leads to Orleans. The traveller, whether he enters or leaves Paris, is struck with the air of squalid poverty in the suburbs, and with the silence and solitude which prevail in the environs of the city. The road to Orleans is one of the most frequented in France, it is broad and straight, and the pavement, which was laid in the time of Louis XIV., is in such perfect preservation, that one is at a loss to conceive how the government can have a pretext for the number of expensive turnpikes which the traveller has to pay his way through. I took notice of the shafts Young speaks of, which lead down into the quarries; they afford a passage to the labourers, and to the blocks of stone which are raised by a wheel worked by horses. A shaft of this sort opening a passage into a tin mine upon the coast of Cornwall in England, has been sunk to the sea at the distance of three hundred yards from high water mark; a steam engine upon a great scale which is erected on the shore, and communicates by means of pipes with the mine, keeps the workmen from being incommoded by water, and they think no more of the waves which are heard to roar incessantly over their heads, than we do of the artificial thunder of a playhouse.\*

We passed through Estampes, which furnished in former times a ducal title to one of the favourites

\* If I am not mistaken, it is mentioned in Professor Silliman's Travels, that this great work was ruined by a vessel which ran against the superstructure in a gale of wind.

of Francis I., who upon many occasions contributed not a little to the embarrassment of his affairs, and we stopped for the night at Angerville. The country we passed along seemed well cultivated, but flat, with a few small towns and villages, and now and then what appeared a gentleman's seat, but there were no farm houses and no hedges. France, though subject to all the evils of a division of property to excess, is yet without those embellishments which the same cause gives rise to in England, and in our northern and eastern states. The greatest want I found the people exposed to was that of fuel; they had no coal, and no wood, frequently, nearer than the forest of Orleans. We found the inns as upon the other great roads—with neither doors nor windows that could shut well, but abounding in every thing an epicure could wish, and furnished with good beds and the best of wine. It was at Angerville that the prince of Condé had arrived in the year 1651, on his way to the southern provinces, with a view of exciting a civil war, when the courier, who had been by mistake directed to Angerville, at last overtook him. You will see the anecdote in Voltaire's Age of Louis XIV., and will admire what important events it pleased Providence to connect with so trifling a circumstance. In passing rapidly along between Estampes and Angerville I was struck with the appearance of some ornamental building on a commanding situation, and was told that it stood on the estate once held by the farmer-general Laborde. Few families were so rich, and very few indeed so conspicuous for the noble use

they made of their immense wealth ; but they have been singularly unfortunate ; two of the sons were lost on the northwest coast of America, and the father, with others of his children, suffered death at the guillotine. Madame Laborde is now the only survivor of this once flourishing family ; she lives, I was told, in the ancient mansion-house, which, together with a small portion of the estate, remained unsold, and finds consolation under all the afflictions she has been exposed to in acts of kindness and generosity to the neighbouring poor.

There came on a snow storm as we left Angerville, and though we were now in one of the most highly cultivated parts of France, yet the view might have reminded the traveller of the deserts of Arabia, whilst the few farm houses that appeared, had such high walls and so many out buildings, that they had the appearance of strong holds where the inhabitants of a whole district had retired for shelter against some predatory excursion of a roving banditti. At length we reached the forest of Orleans, which is very much diminished, and entered the city by the very gate through which the valiant Joan of Arc so boldly and so successfully sallied out against the English at the famous siege, on the event of which the fate of all France once depended. It would have been very agreeable to us to have passed a few days in this ancient place, where Shakspeare lays so many scenes in his Henry VI., and to have traced, as may still be done, some vestiges of those times ; but we soon found, that we were in the most extravagant of all inns, and that it would be



ruinous to remain there. There had been indeed, the whole length of the way from Paris, a disgusting eagerness after money, which I had no where before observed ; it arose no doubt from the road being a more frequented one than any we had before travelled, and affording those who live by the side of it frequent opportunities of petty gain from the wants and accidents to which travellers are exposed. They reminded me of what I have heard of the wild beasts of certain countries, who, having once tasted of human blood, are said never to be satisfied with any other. No sooner does a carriage stop at the post-house, than two or three mechanicks are seen prowling about it in hopes of some petty job, which they perfectly well know how to exaggerate the importance of, and not the smallest service of any kind is ever rendered without payment being required. I have been dunned by a man who had mounted of his own accord upon the hind wheel of the carriage and pulled the oil cloth over the imperial, and who observed in justification of his importunity, that in his efforts to serve us his foot might have slipped, and he might have hurt himself, so as to be incapable of working for his family. Orleans stands in one of the most fertile parts of France, and had some manufactories which have shared the fate of all those that in any degree depended upon foreign commerce ; but being upon the Loire, by which a continued intercourse is kept up with Nantes, and in the vicinity of the canal, by which the waters of the Loire are made to communicate with those of the Seine, it has been enabled to re-

tain a degree of internal trade. The city is one of the most ancient in the empire, but derives its principal importance in history from the siege of 1428. The successes of the English, even after the death of Henry V., were so great and so uninterrupted, that the king of France, Charles VII., had nearly lost all hopes. Surrounded by persons who, with all the insolence of unpaid services, presumed to excess upon their merit, without the means of supporting any appearance of regal dignity, and scarcely able to supply the wants of nature, the king had more than once reconciled himself to the humiliating idea of giving up the contest, and of retiring for safety to the mountains of the Cevennes ; but his wavering resolution had been as frequently recalled, and his spirits buoyed up above despair, by the united exertions of two ladies, of whom it is perhaps as singular that they should have lived in friendship, as that their efforts should have been so well directed and so successful. The queen, Mary of Anjou, had sacrificed her plate and jewels to the necessities of the moment ; but had never lost her hopes. The king's retreat, she said, would be a signal of submission to his most faithful adherents, nor would any one hesitate to desert a prince who deserted his own cause. To the remonstrances which proceeded, with so much propriety, from the queen, to the dictates of her masculine good sense and spirit, the fair Agnes Sorel added arguments which were not without their weight. Her fate, she said, had been predicted by the greatest astrologer of the age, who had told her that

she was to live many years the beloved mistress of a king and conqueror; she had hitherto, it seemed, mistaken her proper station, but would now retire to the court of Henry, where she could not fail of a fortune more correspondent to her wishes, where her destiny might be fulfilled, and the will of the stars accomplished. The monarch was now roused to sentiments which better became him, and declared his determination rather to perish with honour in the conflict, than to yield ingloriously before his imperious enemies. Such was the influence of female firmness and good sense, and of female charms, when Charles was yet more essentially assisted by a miracle of female enthusiasm, in the person of the celebrated maid of Orleans. The siege which had been for some time converted into a blockade, had lasted seven months, when the garrison, reduced to despair, by the loss of a large convoy of provisions on its way to their relief, offered to surrender to the combined armies of England and Burgundy, retaining possession of the advanced posts only until it could be determined between the besiegers what troops were first to march in. It was in this awful crisis, when the fate of France depended upon a trifling circumstance, when the besiegers and the besieged had already established so friendly a communication, that the town people lent the English some articles which were necessary for the celebration of a religious festival, that the maid of Orleans appeared and made the king those promises which are mentioned in history. The

events which followed are so singular, that we cannot be surprised if while the French considered this heroine as a chosen instrument of God, the English should have supposed her no better than an implement of the devil, and some allowance will be made for their conduct towards her, if we consider them as under that persuasion. The Sorbonne was consulted, and their opinion encouraged the parliament of Paris to decide that there was witchcraft in the case. Nor will it appear so singular that such should have been, at that period, the preposterous blindness of so respectable a body, if we advert to the fatal delusion which took place at Salem, in the province of Massachusetts, upon this same subject of witchcraft, full two centuries after, and until how late a period opinions of a similar sort have prevailed in many parts of Europe.\* It is not more than

\* A great deal of interesting information may be found in the Encyclopedia and other books on the subject of witchcraft, which, whatever we may think of it in these latter days, was a subject once supposed to be connected with the higher interests of men, in so much as a disbelief in witchcraft tended, it was asserted, and by the gravest authority, to affect the evidence of religion, and even of a Deity. Sir Matthew Hale, one of the luminaries of the English bench, valued himself on being able to lead a jury to convict a real witch, notwithstanding all the arts, and disguise of sorcery, and the assistance of their infernal master; and Lavater, the sagacious Lavater, whom I remember seeing at Zurich, was a believer in witchcraft. Even Johnson is not very remote from countenancing such an opinion, and Addison, whilst he laughs at their supposed interference, and, at the objects whom suspicion is apt to fall upon, yet seems inclined to believe in witchcraft and in witches. It would still, however, be ridiculous, notwithstanding the weight of these great names, to set about refuting the existence of witches. But respect ought to be

150 years since the maréchale d'Ancre was executed at Paris for having practised the arts of sorcery, in obtaining an ascendancy over the queen's mind. The person most to blame in the whole of this disgraceful affair of the execution of the maid of Orleans, was the king of France, who suffered a heroine, to whom, as Hume says, the generous superstition of the ancients would have erected altars, to expiate the signal services she had rendered to him and to her native country, by a painful death, without the smallest interference in her behalf. Immersed in pleasure, and relying upon the exertions of others, he was too generally insensible to his own danger, and must, upon this occasion, have been lost to every sentiment of honour and of gratitude. Once, says Mezerai, that La Hire came to speak to him on some important affair, the king, who was then

had for the opinions of former times, and our actors show their ignorance, and want of taste, in rendering the appearance, and the agency of the weird sisters so ludicrous in Macbeth. Shakspeare, whatever his private opinion may have been, and we have no reason to suppose it was otherwise than that of the age in which he lived, would have been very far indeed from treating ludicrously any article of belief, which was countenanced by the Church, and by the sovereign, for whose amusement he wrote. One mode of detecting a witch was to burn some animal, supposed to be bewitched by her; and it will hardly be credited perhaps, that in this most enlightened nation of ours, as the President has lately in one of his answers to an address declared it to be, and in the year 1815, a cow was formally selected and burnt to death with that view, in no very barbarous part of East Tennessee.

Cette imprecation "elle est sorcière," "il est sorcier," devenue ridicule de nos jours, faisoit frissonner il y a quelques siècles, dit Mad. de Stäel; tous les piers les plus sacrés se brisoient, quand ses paroles étoient prononcées, etc. See de L'Allemagne par Mad. de Stäel; article Jeanne d'Arc.

wandering like an exile, in his own dominions, showed him the preparations he was making for a splendid entertainment, and asked what he thought of them. "I think," said La Hire, "that it would be impossible for any man to lose a kingdom more gayly."

The Loire, which is at times very shallow, was now full. Several large boats, under a press of sail, were coming up from Nantes. The borders of the river, as far as the view extends, are covered with meadows, vineyards, and gardens. Towns and villages, and what appeared more like farm-houses than any thing I had hitherto seen, were thickly strewed along, and the whole was a magnificent assemblage of interesting objects. Our next stage, through a fine country and by the side of the Loire, was to Blois, a very old, and no very clean, town. It is situated on a slope which rises gently from the water's edge. We had not been able to descend the river as commodiously as Madame de Sevigné did; but we lodged in the same inn, and probably in the same apartments; for nothing appears to have been done to the house for more than a century. It was formerly called the Galere, but is now known as the post-house.

You may well conceive that we were not long without walking up as far as the castle, where the states general of France have been frequently held, and where the celebrated duke of Guise was put to death by order of Henry III. We found the court of the castle overgrown with weeds, and the staircase hardly practicable, and heard no noise

but our own footsteps and the whistling of the wind ; but there was something in this frightful solitude, in this scene of ruined walls and towers, tottering to their fall, which is not unfriendly to wholesome meditation, when connected with the memory of past times, and the recollection of what had been said, or done, or perpetrated within these enclosures. Perhaps no assassination, not even that of Cæsar, approached so near to being justifiable as that of the Duke of Guise, and particularly if we consider how extremely unfavourable the manners of the age were to every degree of order and good government ; to that adoration of beauty, that enthusiasm of courage which had impelled the gallant knight of ancient days, and to all the amiable extravagancies of chivalry, the greatest depravity had succeeded, and the grossest debauchery. The slightest provocation was revenged with blood ; and the apparent fairness of open defiance was blended with the profligate policy of private murder.

The principal growth of the country we could command a view of seemed to be vines, and there are some manufactories in the town, which are said not to flourish. That of cutlery, at least, does not, if I may judge from the importunity of those who brought us some specimens to look at, and who seemed as anxious that we should purchase a trifling article or two, as if they had been asking charity.

We saw Chambord at a distance, on the other side of the river. Young will have given you a

very good idea of the castle, and of the splendid establishment which Louis XV. created there for his favourite general, who is said never to have been great but at the head of an army. The place is now in ruins; but it does not appear that any part of the forest has been converted to the purposes of agriculture, though Young, whose book is highly esteemed in France, has given very good advice on that subject. Game of all sorts were shut up here in prodigious quantities, and roamed at large over a space of twenty thousand acres. A great waste of land, surely, in a country which was rather overstocked with inhabitants. The decree of the national assembly which put an end to all feudal rights having let in a crowd of hungry peasants upon these lords of the forest, thousands of them were destroyed in a short time, and among them were found not less than eight hundred wild boars.

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## LETTER LXXIV.

MY DEAR E——,

SHORTLY after leaving Blois, we entered upon the embankment which protects the low grounds from the overflowings of the Loire. It rises very gradually to an elevation of fourteen or fifteen feet above the level of the cultivated land, and is about twenty-five feet wide on the top. It lies on one or the other side of the river, or on both,



according to the situation and extent of the low grounds, which are every where in a state of the highest cultivation. Wherever they terminate and the high land commences, it is generally by a slope sufficiently gentle to be also in cultivation, and, for the most part, in vineyard; there are some vines also in the low grounds which are trained from tree to tree, as in Lombardy. These last afford good grapes, I am told, but the wine they produce is of an inferiour quality. The care of the embankment is by no means left to the individual over whose land it passes, and whose possessions it protects; it is a general concern, and being by far the greater part of the way the high road of the country, it is kept up, and repaired by the profits of the different turnpikes. The earth which was necessary for the construction of this useful work was generally taken from the outside in dry seasons, and there are sluices at certain distances for letting off any great accumulation of rain water.

Amid a number of ancient castles on the left bank of the river, we were struck with the appearance of Chaumont; it stands upon a low but rugged rock, and overlooks a little town, which it seems to command and to protect. Chaumont is the property of a gentleman who has preferred to become an American citizen and to live in New-York. It would have cost me a struggle to have exchanged the castle of my ancestors, and such a castle in so fine a country, for the narrow streets, the musquitos, and the docks, and the yellow

fever of New-York. But I can conceive that the difference of government to one who has a family growing up may very possibly supersede every other consideration. The site of Chaumont, which was besieged and taken by Henry II. of England some five hundred years ago, called our attention to the history of that great prince, and the more so, as we were now passing through the provinces which formed his hereditary dominions as heir of the ancient house of Plantagenet, when blinded by interest and ambition, just as a man might be in these latter times, he thought himself fortunate in contracting a marriage with the heiress of Guyenne, who disgraced and tormented him by her improper conduct, and by her jealousy, and excited his sons to acts of perfidy and rebellion against the most generous and indulgent of fathers.

Some good maxims for the government of human life are surely to be learned in history, and the sad story of Henry II. would be found containing as wholesome lessons, and as good morality, as any novel I know. The bitter fruits of an interested and rather degrading marriage, and the consequences of indulgence to himself and to his sons might have been worked up by the hand of Richardson into something as pathetick as *Clarissa Harlow*. Fortune had deserted him in his old age, and he must have exhibited a sad spectacle of the vicissitudes of human grandeur to the few who remained faithful to him, when he retired, broken-hearted and in despair, to the castle

of Chinon. It was here they beheld this mighty lord of England, of Ireland, and of the fairest parts of France, the greatest and wisest monarch of his time, so distinguished for his abilities in peace and war, whose character both in publick and private life was, with very few exceptions, without a blemish, and who possessed every accomplishment both of body and mind which could render a man either estimable or amiable, sinking under the disgrace of a dishonourable peace, oppressed by his children, deserted by his favourites, and retiring to die in an obscure castle, and affording a striking lesson of the versatility of human affairs. I have often thought that lord Lyttleton's account of the last moments of this great monarch's life was as pathetick a picture as is to be found in history, and that it ought to weigh with the reader, in favour of one of the dullest books that was ever written.

The fickleness and presumption of his son Henry, eager to acquire power, and incapable of using it, the outrageous arrogance, and impatient ambition of Richard, and the base ingratitude of his son John, whose interests he had always fondly cherished, had drawn from the unhappy father, now overloaded with cares, and sorrows, some expressions of the deepest despair; he cursed the hour on which he received his miserable being, says the historian, and implored the malediction of Heaven upon his ungrateful and undutiful children. But there was one son left to comfort him, this was his natural son Geoffry, who had absented

himself at the signing of the late treaty with the other Princes, for he wished not to be a witness to so humiliating a transaction, but had hastened to Chinon, as soon as he heard of his fathers illness and finding him so oppressed with the violence of the fever, that he could not sit up in his bed, he raised his head by supporting it upon his own bosom. Henry fetched a deep sigh, and turning his languid eyes upon him, said, "My dearest son, as you have in all changes of fortune, behaved yourself most dutifully and affectionately to me, doing all that the best of sons could do, so will I, if the mercy of God shall permit me to recover from this sickness, make such returns to you, as the best of fathers can make, and place you among the greatest and most powerful subjects in all my dominions. But if death shall prevent my fulfilling this intention, may God, to whom the recompense of all goodness belongs reward you for me." "I have no wish (replied his son) but that you may recover and may be happy."

But I must not make too free with lord Lytleton. We passed through Amboise, and took a hasty look at the exterior of the ancient castle where Charles VIII. was born, and which is connected with some important events in the history of France. We saw Chanteloup far upon our left, and could distinguish the column which Monsieur de Choiseul erected during his exile, in honour of those who came to visit him. This magnificent house of Chanteloup was erected at the

expense, and under the particular direction of Mad. des Ursins, at a time when supposing herself certain of attaining a principality in Flanders, she proposed to exchange it with Louis XIV. for the Touraine, and the county of Amboise. How it came into the hands of Mr. de Choiseul I know not. The reader may see in the memoirs "d'un Voyageur qui se repose" and in the letters of Mad. du Deffand, some account of the manner of living at Chanteloup, which was in a style of the most magnificent hospitality. The Duke was very generally and very much beloved. Can you conceive, said Madame du Barri to a Lady at court, how I, who do not know the Duke de Choiseul, should hate him so heartily, I should conceive it much less replied the Lady if you did know him. No individual before the revolution ever united so much power in his own person as Monsieur de Choiseul, being at one time at the head of the three great departments of the army, the navy, and foreign affairs. From this world of business, this torrent of human affairs, the transition to the tranquillity of rural life must have been painful, and it was wise in him to think of amusing himself by the pursuits of agriculture. I do not imagine, however, from what I heard as I passed, that his proficiency in farming was ever very great or very profitable ; his noble cow-house and well established dairy, which Young speaks so highly of, could not, it seems, supply the household with milk, and Chanteloup was sold after his death to pay his debts.

To the castles of the former nobility, which are spread along the river, there were now added, as we approached Tours, a number of comfortable houses, which bespoke the prosperous trade of that ancient city in better times, and there began also to be seen some singular habitations scooped out of the soft rock which must have formed the banks of the river, in days of yore, before it had made for itself so deep a channel. The chimnies to these are opened through the rock, and smoke is frequently seen to rise amidst horses and cattle, who are thus grazing on the top of a human habitation. These cavern houses are generally inhabited by the class of labourers, and afford others the facility of having very cool and dry cellars at a trifling expense. We shortly after passed the ruins of the venerable and once wealthy and distinguished monastery of Marmoutier, and entered Tours over a noble bridge of fifteen arches, which leads into one of the handsomest streets we had ever seen in France. The houses are of hewn stone, their fronts have a uniform appearance, and there are side pavements for the accommodation of foot passengers. All that heaven has ever bestowed upon man was once to be enjoyed in this fine country. But their manufactories, which formed a principal source of their prosperity, are gone to decay, and the overplus of what the earth in its utmost fertility produces, but suffices a livelihood and the means of paying taxes. In walking about the town, I saw nothing that looked like opulence or prosperity, and the playhouse

which we attended in the evening, was the very emblem of wretchedness. I could not have imagined that I should find a theatre in one of the handsomest towns of France, in comparison of which, the playhouse over the old beef-market at Newport might be called a splendid place. The cathedral, which you may have seen a description of in some book of travels, and which was once distinguished for a profusion of Gothick ornaments, and revered as a place of peculiar sanctity, was defaced and defiled with the most profligate ingenuity during the revolution. The workmen employed upon this iniquitous occasion are said to have received nearly thirty thousand livres as wages, and the government is now expending more than twice that sum to restore this ancient place of worship as much as possible to its former appearance.

Tours is known in history as the birth-place of Agnes Sorel, who, with all her frailties, is said in an epigram made upon her by Francis I. to have rendered more service to France, than the prayers and the mortifications of a whole convent of nuns could.

It was at Tours that Louis XI. dragged on the last period of his wretched life, the horrors of which have been described by his historian, Comines, with so much truth and simplicity. He had trifled with oaths and promises, had oppressed his subjects, and put numbers to death, on every frivolous pretence; he had exercised his ingenuity too in the invention of such instruments of torture, as might best prolong the sufferings of those, who were the peculiar

objects of his vengeance, and he now felt the full force of all the enormities he had committed, with the additional mortification of being exposed to the insolence and rapacity of a physician, whom he did not dare to dismiss. On leaving Tours we took a last look at what remains of Marmoutier, which once belonged to the Benedictines. Those good fathers, who like all of their order, were distinguished for the sanctity of their lives and for their erudition, here lived in the centre of a great estate, which they cultivated to advantage, and whilst the growing ornaments of their church, and their various buildings, encouraged artists of every denomination; their hospitality and charity consoled every wanderer in distress, and their charity relieved the poor. It does not appear that the lands which were once their property are better cultivated, or the revenue arising from them put to a better use than formerly; and as to the poor, they are now left to Providence. The nation meanwhile has received no benefit whatsoever from this sacrilegious confiscation. The purchase money in assignats, when paid into the treasury after a year's credit, was not equivalent to more than 10 or 15 pounds sterling, whilst the lead alone from the roof of the church and of the other principal buildings sold for upwards of twelve hundred pounds. Our road was now entirely confined to the embankment, and as the low grounds were in some places of no great breadth, we had an opportunity of examining several of the cavern houses as we passed along; they are in some places, where the cliff recedes



sufficiently as it ascends, in tires one above the other, and it then sometimes happens, that the smoke of one man's habitation rises up in the midst of his neighbour's garden. Our first day's journey, and it was a very short one, brought us to the house of Monsieur Du Vau de la Fariniere, to whom we were particularly recommended by his son, whom I had been so happy as to become acquainted with at Geneva; and we had the pleasure of being received in an ancient castle like looking mansion, on the banks of the Loire in Touraine, with the same hospitality we should have experienced in Carolina or Virginia. Our host was far advanced in life. He had been living during the whole of the revolution upon the confines of the country which was the seat of civil war, and had suffered from the exactions of both parties. In common with many other parents, he had been compelled by a law, in the highest degree unjust, to sell property in order to pay a child's portion of his estate for a son who had emigrated. To render a parent responsible for a son, who is made a soldier, and beyond the term at which the parental authority would in every other instance cease, or to sieze during the life of the parent upon such a portion of his estate as the son would be entitled to if he should be the longer liver, are laws so remote from justice, that one might almost suppose them the invention of some ingenious writer, who was speculating upon the vices of mankind, in order to ascertain with how small a degree of honour and equity men might be kept together under a certain form of government. In common too

with every other proprietor, he felt the weight of taxes, accompanied as it was with the impossibility of selling to any advantage the yearly productions of his estate, but he enjoyed the tranquillity of the present moment, maintained as it was by a uniform and regular administration of justice, and never broken in upon by any appearance of war or by parties of tired soldiers clamorous for food and quarters, and he considered the general operation of a similar sentiment as affording a very solid support to the present government. The recollection of former atrocities, says Mr. Burke, forms a sort of security to those who exercise a less ferocious tyranny. Men prefer a quiet, however a reluctant submission to those who are somewhat satiated, and who like wolves are a little more tame from being a little less hungry, in preference to an irruption of the famished devourers, who are prowling and howling about the fold.

The peasants in the neighbourhood of La Fariniere, like those of every part of France I had hitherto visited, have benefited by the revolution. They have paid their debts in depreciated assignats, and they have added to their little portion of property by purchases of land on very easy terms; they have also acquired, as I have formerly mentioned, some little appearance of political privileges, and have been relieved from the *taille* and the *Gabelle*. The *taille* was in addition to a great variety of taxes under the old government, and, as all the gentry who were supposed to give their personal services in war, and all the clergy who gave their prayers,

and all who either held employments under the crown, or could purchase the title of some imaginary office, of which, strange as it may seem, there were many for sale, were exempted from paying, besides numberless exemptions obtained by favour with the intendant, the burthen of payment fell upon the lower orders, and the misery was, that the number of exemptions did not at all affect the yearly sum required by the royal treasury, or the proportion which the persons who conducted the business assessed each province to. This provincial assessment having been communicated to the intendant, was by him apportioned to the different parishes, the individuals, of which, forming by election, or by appointment, I forget which, a sort of town council, determined the quota of each according to his means. The effect of this wretched mode of assessment was to induce the peasant to affect even more poverty and distress than he really endured, that he might pay less.

Rousseau mentions a striking and melancholy instance of this in one of his rambles, where a farmer at whose house he had asked hospitality, and whom he found dining on black bread, and sour milk, after looking him earnestly in the face, and ascertaining that he was not an informer, produced from a place of concealment below the floor a very good meal, which had been hidden at his approach. By the word *Gabelle*, is to be understood the excise on salt, and the police which regulated the distribution of it. In the first place, every family was held liable to consume a certain quantity of salt every year, and

this they were to purchase at a certain price, whether they wanted it or not, and as the temptation to smuggle an article so necessary and so easily transported was irresistible ; it became a fruitful source of recruits for the galleys, besides occasioning a great many fines, imprisonments, and whippings, and in some instances, death. It brought down ruin and disgrace in short, upon many men, many women, and many children, extending upon a yearly average to at least 3500 people, of which in one instance two hundred and one were children. All this was horrible, you will say, it might however be avoided, but what could not be avoided, and what would have been to us as dreadful almost as the galleys, every family was subject to have their houses searched for salt, upon suspicion of their keeping more by them than the quantity legally procured, and their daily consumption of provisions was scrutinised, and an account taken of that proportion of their usual dinner, which was made up of salt meat. Odious and oppressive as the gabelle was in its effects ; it might have been borne with patience or rather with resignation, had it been collected by the officers of government, and gone, to appearance at least, into the coffers of the king. But in this, and in some other cases, it was customary for the king's ministers to bargain with the farmers-general, who paid a sum of money in advance, and employed their own agents in the collection. And these either feeling no compassion, or not being at liberty to manifest any, and being armed with all the powers of law, were seen rigorously to exact every sous, whilst

their principals being ambitious of distinction, and incapable of attaining either the respectability of the magistrate, or the honour and glory of the military order, endeavoured to excite admiration by an ostentatious display of wealth, which joined to their excessive luxury contributed still more to insult the publick misery, and sharpen the indignation of those who suffered. There were some honourable exceptions to this general character of the farmers-general, but such has been always the imputation under which persons in a similar situation have laboured in all countries. The Publicans mentioned in Scripture, were the agents of the Roman knights, who farmed the revenues; and you observe, they are always ranked with sinners. Another source of oppression to the poor cultivator of the soil, which no longer exists, was the Capitaineries. The Capitaineries were lordships bestowed by the king, and which gave a right to all the game contained within their limits, and against these, whether feathered or four footed, it was the fate of the peasants, as I have before observed to you, to defend the scanty crop which was to give him bread, and enable him to pay his taxes, a matter of almost equal importance to him, and certainly so to the agents of the farmers-general. He was to be careful too, not to defend his crop too roughly, he was to repulse these invaders as gently as possible, as gently in short, as we should a child we were afraid of hurting, and after all the fatigue, and the wretched fare of the day, the night was frequently consumed by whole families, united in keeping guard with torches and with horns to frighten away the common enemy.

The cultivator was to be careful too, not to manure his land in a way that might affect the flavour of the game, when served upon the seigneur's table, and not to injure the hopes of the rising generation of these plagues and tormentors, by cutting his grain too soon. Game is now what it ought to be, the property of the person upon whose land it is found. There was the absurd corn police too, which prevented the superfluous grain of one province from passing into another, and there were many feudal services, not often exacted indeed, but which might have been exacted, and were therefore as derogatory to human nature. These last, it has been said, and said with truth, constituted the price which the peasant had stipulated to pay for the land he was allowed to cultivate, but it was a price wrung from him by necessity. From all these the peasant is now free, and he is free from the mockery of justice in the seigneurial courts, which comprised every species of despotism, and occasioned an irreparable loss of time, and enormous expenses on the most trifling occasions. These taxes though heavy, are now in proportion to the property they hold, and to their consumption. Their wages as labourers are increased, and every article which they can raise for the use of the neighbouring towns commands a higher price; they are, in short, better fed, better clothed, better protected by the law, and live in better houses, than before the revolution. What they feel most is the Conscription; but the complaints of those who lament the absence of their children or deplore their loss, are drowned in shouts

of victory at the arrival of every courier, and so great are the effects of the general exultation among the lower orders in some of the distant provinces, that without any knowledge of the enemy to be combated, or of the occasion of the war, or even of the part of the world it is to be carried on in, thousands would fly to arms at the first summons. A single defeat of a French army, however, commanded by the emperor in person, might put an end to all this enthusiasm, and cure them of their delirium, for all depends upon the high idea they entertain of his capacity, and of his good fortune. The taxes, as I said, are high; they might better indeed be called exorbitant, for what with the fourth of the net income; and all the various taxes on consumption, on doors, windows, chimneys, furniture, servants, and houses, and the duties payable on the transportation of any article from place to place, and on its entering a town, the landholder is supposed to pay upwards of thirty-three per cent. on his income; this is paid monthly or quarterly, with allowance of somewhat more than the legal interest for those who pay in advance.

The mansion house we were received at with a kindness of hospitality, which is but seldom experienced in this old world, was within a few yards of the bottom of the *cliff*, which rose perpendicularly to a great height above it, and this had been excavated according to the custom of the country into all the various offices which the services of a large and opulent family required. It was so contrived that light should be admitted into the kitchen, but the spa-

cious vaults which held provisions for the use of the farm, or the produce of the vintage, or grain, or wood, were so dark, that an old female servant, who put me in mind of dame Leonardo in *captain Rolando's* cavern, was obliged to precede us with a torch. The rock is of chalk, which is known to be a marine production, and we were therefore walking along what must have been once the bottom of the sea. It afterwards became the bank of a rapid river, and is now a receptacle for the fruits of the earth in a most fertile country. There is a natural terrace near the house of La Faciniere, which commands an extensive prospect of the neighbouring country, and I beheld from it some little towns, the names of which are known in history, a number of castles and country houses, a highly cultivated soil and a beautiful river, which, whatever its appearance may be in dry seasons, with long intervals of sand between its shallow branches, was now what a river ought to be, "strong without rage, without o'erflowing full," and afforded the means of communication along a great extent of country. I was sorry to observe that almost every one of the castles and ancient mansions in view were uninhabited, either from the inability of the owner to furnish it, or from its having devolved on some new proprietor, who lived in one of the neighbouring towns in the exercise of some trade or profession. Such of the exiled nobility as have been permitted to return, could not recover possession of any part of their property, which had been sold, or of their forests, even though they had remained unsold; so that the



permission to return has been in general nothing more than a permission to endure poverty at home, rather than abroad. The price of land, notwithstanding the heavy taxes and the small profits which arise from agriculture, is much greater than before the revolution; that part which is protected from the river is sold, as I was assured, at one hundred and twenty pounds sterling an acre. The embankment, which has thus converted a pestiferous swamp into a scene of useful industry, and plenty, was begun by some of the earlier kings of France, but improved to its present appearance by Louis XIV., whose vain glory and destructive ambition were certainly connected with some ideas of real magnificence and useful grandeur. It had been begun at a very early period, and Henry II. of England, whose long experience of the ingratitude of mankind, could never, as Hume observes, affect the generous sensibility of his heart, had the glory of contributing to this great work, and found means, at a period of some difficulty in his affairs, to lay the foundation of that part of it which is near the Pont de Cè, for the benefit of his Angevin subjects.

We now passed far more rapidly than I could have wished along a very beautiful and interesting country. We had left the great road which leads from Paris to Bordeaux, we were remote from that which travellers generally take to Nantes, and found ourselves among a people whose good nature and simplicity reminded us of Switzerland. It was entirely a new race of tall, straight men, who, with their overalls, and short coats, and large flapped

hats gave me a very perfect idea of a Vendean soldier.

The ancient city of Saumur, which seems to have been destined to suffer by every civil war in France, was on our left ; a line drawn hence to La Rochelle would include the greater part of the country which was the seat of war in La Vendée, of which I will endeavour in a future letter to give you some particulars not very generally known. We now quitted the river, and passing under the ancient and gloomy walls of Angers, which would hardly refuse to open its gates to such armies as Shakspeare brings before it in his tragedy of King John, we stopped for the night at Varades, where we found excellent accommodations in an inn, whose appearance by no means seemed to promise such. We had made the same observation at Les Roziers the evening before, and it is the more surprising as there are so few travellers. It has frequently happened to us to go a hundred and sometimes two hundred miles without meeting any sort of carriage, except waggons, in which alone almost the sole exchange of merchandise takes place between Paris and the distant provinces.

There are but few canals in France, and the utility of that of Orleans, which makes a figure on the maps from the waters it connects, is very much diminished by the uncertainty of the navigation of the Loire. Boats have been known to be three months waiting for a sufficient depth of water and a fair wind between Nantes and Orleans.

We had no sooner lost sight of the river, than the face of the country changed ; it no longer reminded me of the low grounds in Carolina, of what they might be converted into, I mean, but rather of some part of Massachusetts or Connecticut ; the surface of the earth was undulated, and it was diversified by an intermixture of woods and different sorts of culture divided by hedges, and interspersed with villages. A traveller, who had time to examine this country, might very well bestow some weeks in visiting the different towns of the *civdevant Anjou* ; many of them are rendered interesting by events which they have been the scene of in former days, by the sieges they have sustained, by the memory of the distinguished personages they have given birth to, and by what remains of their once flourishing manufactories. From the ancient princes of this country was descended the celebrated Margaret of Anjou, whose unconquerable courage and perseverance could, for a time, uphold the falling fortunes of the house of Lancaster. It is somewhat singular that Hume, who does justice on some occasions to the great endowments of this distinguished personage, should have overlooked her love of literature and her patronage of learned men. She founded a College at Cambridge, and endowed it with what was no mean sum for those days, although the difficulties of her situation had already commenced. Shakspeare too, who was in general so much under the influence of Lancastrian prejudices, is very far from doing her justice. There is a tradition in Angers, that Mr. Pitt, so long

the prime minister of England, was born there. The people of Angers have no right, I fear, to any such honour, but it is not surprising that any community should claim any possible degree of connexion with the most eloquent, the most undaunted, the most disinterested man of the age he lived in. Succeeding ages will revere the memory of this distinguished statesman, who contended for the liberties of mankind, and they will admire the proud and dignified station he assumed at the period of the famous regency bill; they will admire his having resolutely placed himself between the throne and the people, prescribing terms to the regent, and securing to the unhappy monarch the facility of re-assuming his authority, and providing meanwhile for every comfort which might alleviate his situation.\*

The productions of the soil and the modes of agriculture would also afford very proper objects of curiosity. The earth is rich in mines of coal, of iron, of copper, and of lead; and there are quarries of marble and of slate, with animal and vegetable fossils without end. The last English monarch

\*The inhabitants of Angiers cannot, I believe, claim Mr. Pitt as their townsman, but they may safely boast, that the greatest captain of the age, the Duke of Wellington, received his military education among them. The duke of Wellington has risen into celebrity long since the letter above was written, but I am glad to pay any tribute of grateful homage to him, as the person, to whom of all others, society is under the most lasting obligation. He has taught the brotherhood of mankind the secret of successful resistance to foreign invasion, and nobly risking his super-eminent reputation, and putting his life upon the cast, he has crushed that military tyranny so insulting and so dangerous to all Europe, and eventually to all America.

to whom this fine country belonged was John, the meanest and most worthless of mankind, and yet the favourite, for a time, of fortune, and, what is still more singular, of a father, who was himself one of the best and most enlightened of men. Such were the effects of his folly and licentiousness, of his cruelty and his treachery, all proper accompaniments to that filial ingratitude, far sharper than a serpent's tooth, for which this monster was conspicuous, that nothing but a death hastened by poison, could have saved him from dragging on a miserable existence as an exile and an outcast. Shakspeare is surely wrong to have rendered him almost interesting.

The first posthouse from Angers was so near a very ancient castle, that we had time to get the doors opened and to enter it. As it lay in the way of the Vendean and republican armies during the civil war, it had been stripped of every sort of furniture, and bore marks of having served as barracks. The apartments are spacious ; an ancient castle, however, must be at best but a cold and gloomy habitation. As we wandered about from room to room, I was struck on entering one, where the seigneur formerly received his company on great occasions, at the appearance of a picture in perfect preservation, which represented a person in the Scotch highland dress, with the insignia of the garter, and as just landed upon a rocky shore, in the act of delivering a paper to another, who receives it with great respect. I soon discovered that the principal personage in the picture was Charles Ed-

ward, the prince pretender, or perhaps his father, who, in England, was called the old pretender, and learned from the person who attended us, that he was meant to be represented as conferring a commission to raise a brigade upon an Irish gentleman of the name of Walsh, whose descendant, Monsieur de Seran, had been so fortunate as to preserve his property from confiscation, and it was in his castle we now were. Madame de Seran is one of the few ladies of high rank, who have accepted a place in the household of the empress, and she is said to be a sort of favourite, a circumstance which has, perhaps, led Monsieur de Seran to hope, as I am told he does, that the embankment on the Loire will be continued, by order of government, so far below Angers as to protect his lands, the greater part of which are now an unwholesome marsh. There was somewhat in the appearance of this mysterious picture, which alone, of every thing in the castle, had been respected by both parties, and in the castle itself, and in the age and appearance of the keeper, and in the chapel, where the proprietors had a seat apart, so different from the rest as to have an air of regal distinction, and in a number of other circumstances, which brought the Mysteries of Udolpho very forcibly to our minds. We now saw marks of war which had never before occurred, in the remains of houses that had been burned, and I heard a great deal of the miseries the inhabitants had been exposed to ; miseries which reminded me of somewhat similar scenes in our own country. I began to perceive also, as we approached the sea, that the

evils of war were more felt, as the inhabitants compared the present stagnation of trade with the shortlived joys of the peace they had been blessed with after the treaty of Amiens, and that they ventured to regret that inordinate ambition which no extent of territory could satiate, and which continues to sacrifice the general happiness and prosperity to the vain and selfish expectation of foreign acquisitions. The environs of Nantes bespeak the opulence of former times, but the situation is low, and must, I should suppose, expose the inhabitants to autumnal fevers. The first streets we entered were narrow, and the houses old and decayed, but we soon found ourselves in what appeared a new city, and after driving across a handsome square we entered the largest and most commodious hotel we had any where seen. I felt and it gave a tincture of somewhat like melancholy to my thoughts, as we drove along the last post that we were now to take leave of travelling in France, which is certainly one of the most agreeable countries in the world to travel over; the accommodations are generally good, the roads excellent, and the horses as strong and willing as they are coarse and ugly; as to the postillions they are as lively and good natured as ever, and much less importunate than formerly, but they are still very great coxcombs, and that too with a union of wretchedness which is not perhaps to be met with in any other country upon earth. One of those, who drove us this last stage, and who I could

see was a very pretty fellow in his own eyes, would have gathered a crowd about him in America. Whips of straw served as boot-legs to his wooden shoes, and a piece of old tapestry, with figures of men and horses and towers and battlements "bosomed high in tufted trees;" protected him from the weather, whilst his sunburned face was partly shaded by the remains of a rose coloured handkerchief, which was thus converted into a substitute for a hat.

There are few towns or villages in France, where there are not beggars who assail every stranger that arrives, and there are various other marks and degrees of poverty not to be met with in America; I have heard a man, as I stood in the market place of a morning, compliment another upon his appearing abroad in a new pair of wooden shoes, as one of our people might wish another joy of a new coat. In Paris particularly there is a great deal of abject poverty concealed under a decent appearance made with clothes and linen hired for the day; numbers who appear occasionally in good company have, it is said, no other resource. There are others again, whose credit is not so extensive, and whose views are more humble. I have seen a row of such, says Mercier, ranged along the Seine early of a morning, wrapped up in their coats, conversing gayly, and exchanging occasionally a pinch of snuff, whilst the only shirt of each, and which he had laboriously washed, was catching the first rays of the sun on



what seemed a gold headed cane stuck in the bank. This once opulent city of Nantes has had some breathing time from the horrors of the revolution, which it was in a particular degree exposed to. But it still exhibits a sad contrast to the descriptions which I have read of it. There were formerly various seminaries, and colleges, and schools of chirurgery, and navigation, and a university, with societies of agriculture, and of the arts, and of musick in particular ; there were also several charitable institutions for the maintenance of the poor and the gratuitous education of their children ; there were manufactories of different sorts, and great distilleries, an overflowing commerce, beautiful publick walks, and a theatre twice as large, says Arthur Young, as that of Drury Lane, and five times as magnificent. Of all this display of opulence and prosperity there remains little more at present than empty warehouses, and mouldering walls ; libraries, hospitals, and schools have gone to ruin, as well as convents and churches, nor has any art and science, or any elegant institution met with more protection than religion. As to commerce and manufactories, they are but the shadow of what they were, and seven eighths of the general capital is sunk. Now and then a small American vessel aided by a swell of the river, and a strong wind from the sea, gets up as far as the city, and there are frequently five or six of them at anchor below Paimboeuf, but the flag of France which formerly crossed the ocean from Nantes in so many various directions, is now

seen only on vessels of from thirty to fifty or perhaps sixty tons, which run from harbour to harbour along the coast, like mice from one hiding place to another, under convoy of an armed vessel or two, the commodore of which with a broad pendant at his main top gallant mast, carries perhaps six four pounders and forty men. The squares and publick walks are still beautiful, but they are silent and solitary, and have been stained with the best blood of the city. Of the playhouse nothing remains but the vestibule; the other parts of this magnificent edifice were consumed by fire during the revolution, nor is there any prospect of its being rebuilt; those meanwhile who cannot live without the amusements of the theatre, must be satisfied with a corner of an old convent which has been converted into something like a playhouse, and with a company of comedians who appear to be in no better circumstances than those of Tours. There is a part of the city called La Fosse, where a long row of lofty houses follows the direction of the river, with trees in front and very commodious quais for the dispatch of business; it was along this street that the victims of Carrier's cruelty were conducted, and at the extremity of it immediately before the doors of a large mill, which was formerly worked by a stream, but which has long been useless, lay the fatal barges. I am not now going to shock you by a recital of scenes that do not bear description. But as far as I could learn from persons who were at Nantes during those wretched times, there does not appear to

be any exaggeration in the printed accounts; as no one ever returned of the hundreds who were embarked, it was easy to prevent the effects of despair by making the prisoners believe, that they were to be transported to some distant country; they would surely otherwise have rushed upon their guard, and expired on the bayonet, rather than have been exposed to a death so unheard of, and in so frightful a form. They consisted in general of citizens of Nantes, of priests who were collected from different departments, and of the inhabitants of La Vendée. A corps of troops was frequently sent out for the purpose of collecting these last, and with general orders to destroy every thing, nor was it unusual to see the party return, (if they escaped the effects of rage and despair in the unhappy people whom they attacked, which was not always the case) loaded like Tartars, from a plundering excursion into some christian country, with various sorts of booty, and driving before them a promiscuous crowd of old and young and women and children. It is but justice to the regular troops to say, that though ready enough to execute the orders of their superiours in spreading ruin and devastation over the fields and through the villages of La Vendée, they refused any longer to conduct prisoners to the water side, when the effects of Carrier's cruel artifice were apparent, it became necessary therefore to have instruments for that special purpose, and the volunteers of Marat were raised, consisting of sixty men under a captain, these wretches who were of the lowest, the most brutal,

the most profligate of the populace, soon deserved the approbation of their employer, and so well satisfied was he with their alacrity, that he extended their powers to the making of domiciliary visits at all hours of the day and night, a power dreadful at all times and in any hands, but more dreadful than death itself, in their abominable perversion of it at the expense of the unhappy families, who were in any degree and from any motive the objects of their attentions.

I have been told of an individual, who acted frequently as a supernumerary upon these occasions, and whose pleasure it was to be ready at the water side, where he would wound and mutilate such of the prisoners as the volunteers of Marat were fastening to the timbers and seats of the barge, adding thus a degree of corporal pain to the anguish of approaching death. It so happened, that he was unnoticed when a change of measures took place, and Carrier and his committee were ordered to Paris. But a young man, whose parents had been among the victims of his brutality, returning from exile some years after, shot the wretch through the head in a publick coffee-house, nor did the police, which is so singularly strict in this country, take any cognisance of the affair. Whilst the inhabitants of Nantes were thus suffering from exhibitions, which were at first confined to the night, but which were soon perpetrated in open day, exhibitions, from the bare recital of which our nature revolts; from a vigilante, an enraged and inveterate enemy, who waylaid every

approach to the city, from the death or imprisonment of their principal citizens, who were suspected of being rich, or of what in the dialect of the times was called *negnciantism*, from continued and severe military duty, from fines and impositions, from famine and almost from thirst, for the waters of the river were polluted to a degree which rendered it unfit for use,\* whilst the unburied bodies of hundreds of Vendean soldiers, executed in the neighbouring meadows, and the remains of such of the sad victims of Carrier's refined cruelty as were disgorged by the Loire, infected the atmosphere with the most poisonous exhalations; Carrier himself, a man of profligate life, and violent passions, insulted the publick misery by scenes of riot and debauchery. The wretches too who surrounded him, and who formed in some measure his court, had appetites and passions of their own to gratify, and interests to consult and enmities to satisfy, and the whole city with as much of the neighbouring country as their power extended over, was thus a prey to the most worthless of mankind.

The people of the earldom of Nantes having separated themselves from Brittany in the 12th century, and chosen a sovereign of their own, whom they afterwards expelled to make room for Geoffry of Anjou, brother to Henry II. of England, that enterprising and able monarch was

\* See the letters of Julien, who had the merit in common with Lequinio, of revealing to the convention the very unworthy conduct of their delegates.

enabled to get possession not only of Nantes but of all Brittany, first as representative of his brother, who died without children, and afterwards as guardian of his own son Geoffry, whom he married to Constance, the daughter of a late Duke of Brittany, and prevailed upon the inhabitants of that extensive dutchy to acknowledge, as their sovereign. This Constance is the lady who renders Shakspeare's play of king John so interesting, and whose adventures, affected as they were by the sad fate of her son, seemed more of the province of romance, than history. The subsequent history of Brittany, the fortunes of the house of Montfort, and the circumstances which finally annexed this part of France to the monarchy are also very interesting. The Bretons were able to secure very important privileges at the marriage of their princess with Charles V. and these joined to the circumstance of their speaking a different language made them always seem a separate people from the French. The ancient castle of Nantes, in which so many monarchs have lodged from the days of Henry II. to those of Louis XIV. has suffered by the accidental explosion of a quantity of gunpowder during the revolution, but is in other respects entire. The angle of the bastion from which the cardinal de Retz let himself down by a rope, remains precisely as it was at the time of his evasion, and I was glad that the door also which opens upon the river, and at which Mad. de Sevigné describes herself as having been

so handsomely received by torch light, is still entire. I wished very much to have gone to Rennes and to Vitri, but it was impossible. I received however a very particular account of the house of Les Rochers from a friend at Rennes, and was glad to find, that the name of Mad. de Sevigné had afforded protection to some old fashioned walks, and that the desk at which she wrote, and the inkstand she made use of, are preserved with religious care. The estate of Les Rochers is the property of Monsieur des Netumiers, a gentleman of lower Brittany, who having been driven from his paternal castle during the civil war, has been so fortunate as to make himself at home at this once favourite residence of Mad. de Sevigné. As we had come provided with letters of recommendation, we experienced the kindness and hospitality of two or three families whom I shall always think of with gratitude, and we found a friend in Mr. Patterson the American consul. Mixing as I did in company at his hospitable house, and at other places, I had frequent opportunities of conversing with persons who had borne a part in the late war of La Vendée, and been present at many of the horrors which attended it. It is the memory of those dismal times which gives to the present government its principal support, for there is nothing which a great majority would not submit to, rather than risk a renewal of them. They feel, however, very sensibly in Nantes the weight of taxes, and the loss of trade ; they feel that the

treasury calls for more in proportion as they are less able to pay, and the additional duty on salt, which raises the price of that indispensable article from two to five sous a pound, has occasioned no slight sensation. The peasants of Brittany who had lately adopted the custom of manuring a certain quality of land with salt, have been obliged to desist. The sudden manner too in which the government imposes any additional duty, and the numerous regulations which are made by people entirely ignorant of or regardless of trade, add extremely to the embarrassment of the commercial world. Disputes are every day arising between the buyers and sellers of salt in cases where the article has not been yet delivered, and many who had contracted to furnish large quantities at certain prices must either recede from their engagements, or be ruined. An appearance of something like a riot in the streets, which I saw yesterday for the first time since I have been in France, I at first imagined was connected with this general cause of dissatisfaction, but I soon discovered my error. Forty or fifty people, partly young men and partly fathers of families, had assembled somewhat tumultuously and were endeavouring to make the keeper of an E O table, who had been carrying on his business very successfully for some time, consent to leave the city, or shut his doors ; but the man, who had according to custom paid largely for permission to hold his table in Nantes a certain time, applied to the



police for protection, a captain's guard was immediately paraded at his door, good order was instantly established, and the keeper of the E O table goes on ruining people with impunity as before. The prevalent turn for gaming either with dice, or in a lottery, which is renewed every fortnight throughout all France, furnishes indeed one of the great financial resources of the empire. Unfortunately for the lower orders, any sum, however small, may be ventured upon a certain number or numbers which the adventurer chooses out of one hundred, his choice is necessarily confined to five, upon any one of which, or upon all, he stakes any sum he thinks proper; five numbers only are drawn out of the wheel; those who happen to have fixed upon any one of the numbers drawn, are the fortunate adventurers, and if upon more than one, they gain in proportion; and the profits are so great in the case of those who shall have chosen all five, that the passions of avarice and ambition are continually excited in the breasts of hundreds from one end of France to the other.

And now, my dear daughter, adieu. I shall write you no more letters from France. In a few days we are to be at Paimboeuf, where I have secured as comfortable lodgings as such a place admits of. I shall there spread my map of France upon the table, collect my notes, and look over my scraps of information, and learn all I can from every one I meet with as to the history and agri-

culture of the neighbouring country, and if we are so happy as to reach New-York in safety, you shall hear from me again.

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## LETTER LXXV.

Newport, (R. I.) July 20, 1806.

MY DEAR E——,

THE few short lines I wrote you from New-York, will have informed you of our safe arrival after a passage of between six and seven weeks, and of our intentions to proceed to this place, where we are once more settled for the summer, after an absence of nearly three years.

It is a portion of my life, which, notwithstanding some moments of anxiety, I trust I shall always look back to with satisfaction ; nor will you, my daughter, have been without your portion of amusement ; you will have followed us through the south of France to Geneva, have accompanied us in imagination to the Glaciers, over Mont Cenis, and along the Simplon, and have rambled with me over Paris by means of the accurate plan I sent you ; from Paris, our route will have carried you along a very interesting part of France which is not much known, to Nantes, where my last letter was dated.

I will now reassume my narration, and, as usual, from my notes, which bring back to me the events of every day, and the impressions of every moment.

There are still very evident vestiges of the war of La Vendée on the way between Nantes and Paimbœuf, but a few years of peace would make every thing of the sort disappear. The churches and private houses would be rebuilt, and the materials of a ruined castle might be applied to some better purpose. My first visit to Paimbœuf was alone. There was something extremely agreeable in the view of the ocean, and in the breeze which came over its surface ; nor was I sorry to find myself for the day with several of my countrymen, who were waiting for a fair wind to carry them out, or employed in putting their cargoes on board of barges to be conveyed to Nantes. I dined with them at the Table D'Hôte, where they seemed to enjoy the abundance of good wine, but they would not agree that there was any thing else besides in all France equal to what our own country produces. As to French cookery, it was their abhorrence ; they could not complain, however, upon this occasion, for the people of the house, who knew the value of such guests, took care to comply with their taste, while the young women who attended, as servants, submitted to a robust sort of gallantry, as Thompson calls it, which is very rarely to be seen in France.

Nothing can give a better idea of the small degree of military skill among the Vendéans during the late war, and the extreme inferiority of their means, than that a place, as Paimbœuf, with nothing better than field fortifications, such as we

threw up in Charleston at the approach of general Prevost, should have resisted all their efforts to become masters of it. The possession of this or any seaport would have enabled them to keep up a constant and open intercourse with England, and it was what the princes of the house of Bourbon required, in order that one of them should land. This is perhaps what at all events ought to have been done. A prince of the royal family determined, like Cyrus, not to seem unworthy of a crown while he was endeavouring to obtain one, and with the fearless gallantry of Henry IV., or the heroism of Charles Edward, and with such materials to make soldiers of as the enthusiasm and courage of the Vendéans afforded, would have been invincible.

You must now, with that pliancy of disposition which I have always given you credit for, figure yourself at the little fishing town of Paimbœuf. Before you, on the other side of the Loire, is the Lower Brittany of former times, the seat of the war of the Chouans, and now divided into a number of new names. Behind you is the country formerly the province of Poitou and the principal seat of the war of La Vendée, and on the left is the great Atlantick. About south east from Paimbœuf is the little island of Noirmontiers, where the inhabitants, though poor, and taught by their own experience alone, have recovered a great deal of valuable land from the ocean by means of dykes. Their mode is, when they begin a work of this sort, to construct it at first so low that the tide passes over it at half

flood ; openings are left for the discharge of the waters, but it is very gradual, and a great deal of sediment and of seaweed is deposited. When this has continued for some time, and the land to be reclaimed appears cultivable, the dyke is raised ; it is made as strong as the means within the reach of the inhabitants will admit of, and is sometimes even faced with stone. Noirmontiers is also remarkable for the quantity of salt made there, and you will see the process very well explained in the Encyclopedia. Some of the canals which have been dug to carry the salt water for this purpose, are as much, I am told, as three miles in length. The island was twice in possession of the Vendean army ; but these troops, who were excellent among woods and rocks, and who were remarkable for a cheerful submission to every want, and for their daring courage, elevated as it was by a degree of religious enthusiasm, were unfit to defend lines, and upwards of two thousand surrendered after a very poor defence, to die in a much less glorious manner, for not to one of them, or to any one of the inhabitants, who were suspected of having in any degree favoured their cause, was mercy shown. In the midst of twenty or thirty officers, who were led to execution upon this occasion, was D'Elbè, one of the most illustrious of the Vendean chiefs ; he had received fourteen wounds in a late action on the main, and had retired to Noirmontiers as to a place where he might secure, and with some degree of tranquillity, the regular attendance of a surgeon,

This distinguished officer was so reduced by illness, that it was necessary to convey him to the place of execution in an elbow chair. His strength of mind, however, did not forsake him; he cheered the companions of his fate by reminding them of the glorious efforts they had made together, in defence of the Temple and the Throne. He strove also, and not without success, to support the spirits of a beloved wife, who was told, together with a lady at whose house D'Elbè and herself had been received, that they also must die. I have been assured by a person, who was an unwilling spectator of this sad scene, that these interesting women surveyed with countenances unmoved, the platoon of soldiers, which was drawn up before them, that they held each other by the hand to the last moment, and requested only as far as they were listened to, that their remains might be treated with decency.

The letter of general Turreau, in which he communicated to the government the success at Noirmontiers, gives a minute account, and in all the language of exultation, of the shocking scenes which were perpetrated there by his order; nor could the report of a victory at sea have been received with greater joy and satisfaction by the convention, who meanly bending under the despotism of Robespierre, applauded as he gave the signal; they thus joined in training their officers to blood, and became participators in all the cruelties which were committed.

You may form an accurate idea of the country, over which this worst of all civil wars was extended, by looking a moment at the map, I suppose you to have before you. A line from Saumur down the Loire, and along the sea coast to La Rochelle, and reaching again to Saumur, would comprehend nearly the whole, and you will perceive near Fontenoy, now honoured with the name of Napoleon, the little stream which has given name to this disastrous war, as that of La Gironde did to an unfortunate faction.

The space above described contains a great variety of soil and situation. On the sea coast it is a long continuation of meadows and salt marshes, intersected by creeks and canals, and variegated by intervals of cultivation, and inhabited by a race of men, whose national activity gets the better of a sickly situation, of which however, they carry the marks very evidently in their faces. There is next a narrow strip of level country, with a few towns and villages, and then succeeds the Bocage, or woody country, which is by far the largest portion of the whole ; it is interspersed with forests, and cut by rapid streams in deep beds, but is healthful and fertile, and abounds in natural pasturage, which supports the large droves of cattle that form the principal property of an uninformed but hospitable and cheerful race of inhabitants. Remote as they are from the rest of mankind, and left exposed to the evils of ignorance and superstition, they experienced at the same time the advantage of having been uninfected by the writ-

ings of modern philosophers, or the dreams of visionary statesmen; and their sentiments of loyalty and religion remained unshaken. The little they had learned of what was going on in France had been far from meeting their approbation, but they had remained quiet, until the government endeavoured to deprive them of their priests, to carry the law of the maximum into execution, and to enroll their youth in the army. This was in the spring of the year 1793, and scarcely three months had elapsed before the royalists, after a great variety of battles and skirmishes, with unequal fortune, but generally with success, were in possession of all the former provinces of Poitou, with part of Brittany, and Anjou. Money, arms, and ammunition came from England. The country supplied an abundance of provisions; an internal administration was established; and several officers, who had acquired experience on happier occasions, trained the inhabitants to arms, and led them to battle; of these Bonchamps and Lescurc deserve the glorious distinction of having never violated the laws of humanity, and of having saved thousands of lives from the rage of their soldiers, who were clamorous for retaliation; but the most distinguished for his knowledge of the sort of war best suited to the nature of the country, and for the inexhaustible resources which he knew how to procure, was Charêtte.

This gentleman, whose signeurial name was De la Contrée, had been brought up in the navy, where



he attained the rank of lieutenant, he had assisted in defending the last moments of the monarchy, on the 10th of August, 1792, and had afterwards emigrated, but was living peaceably in his castle, near La Garnache, when he was summoned by the publick voice to place himself at the head of those, who were willing to risk their lives in the service of the altar and of the throne. Of all the generals of antiquity he most resembled Sertorius; like him he could contend successfully against very superiour forces, and with soldiers whom he had formed himself, and whom he had taught by his own example, to encounter danger with cheerfulness, and to endure with perseverance the most accumulated distress; as skilful as Sertorius to avail himself of the power of superstitions over the minds of the ignorant; intrepid, insensible to pain, daring upon occasion, and yet full of art and contrivance, moderate in punishing offences, and yet not to be restrained by the interference of his friends from any act of severity that he thought useful to his case. Such was Charlotte; with dispositions naturally humane and a turn for the liberal amusements of society he would have preferred a life of ease and tranquillity, but the miseries of the times called forth his exertions, and his temper being at length soured by disappointments and bad fortune, he is said to have been somewhat precipitate in taking vengeance of those whom he suspected of injuring or betraying him.

Neither under his command, nor that of their other generals, did the people of La Vendée ever acquire the steady discipline of regular troops. Their attack was always disorderly, and their time of service uncertain ; but they were faithful, temperate, and obedient, and even merciful to their enemies taken in war, till the atrocious cruelties of the republicans provoked them to retaliation. They never deserted, and when taken, it was very seldom that any one would accept of life on condition of crying *Vive la republique*. Their only request was, that their remains might be committed to the earth, and not left exposed to the wild beasts of the forest.

After the unfortunate passage of the Loire, of which Charêtte never approved, and the loss of Noirmontiers, general Turreau, provoked at the resistance which was still made to the arms of the Republick, determined upon the execution of a plan, which gave an additional character of ferocity to this horrid war. Twelve columns of troops were to march from different points on the circumference of La Vendée, towards a common centre, with orders to burn or destroy whatever was *susceptible* of destruction, and to massacre the armed and unarmed, the old and the young. It will appear incredible to you, but those orders were obeyed ; nor was it possible for the soldiers of the infernal army, as it was named all over France, to bestow more attention upon the claims of the patriot, than upon the prayers of the roy-

alist; all perished alike; the march of each column was to be traced along the high roads, over plains and through forests by every mark of destruction, and by the silence of death. A great deal has been written of this war, and events have been coloured as you may suppose by the political sentiments of those who wrote, but all agree in the system of destruction which was pursued, and in their accounts of the atrocities which were committed; it is universally agreed also, and mankind will so far benefit by these dismal events, it is to be hoped, that the cruel experiment was unsuccessful, and the forces of Charêtte, who would never be driven out of the country, were considerably increased by it.

The fall of Robespierre, the subsequent punishment of Carrier, and a change of measures throughout France, led to the pacification of La Jaunais (1776,) and Charêtte, after coming to terms with the republick, without sacrificing his principles, or the security of La Vendée, was received with every mark of respect by the constituted authorities of Nantes. This pacification however, lasted but a very few weeks.

Charêtte, in his proclamation for a renewal of hostilities, accuses the commissioners of the Republick of having deceived him by a secret promise of re-establishing the monarchy, and complaints of numerous infractions, whilst they deny the charge, and assert, that he was led to renew the horrors of civil war, in the hope of assistance

from the powerful army of emigrants which were known to be arraying in England. This was the army whose attempts ended so fatally at Quiberon. The gentlemen who commanded the expedition, and who formed some of the corps of which it was composed, were too late in their attempts. A better executive government had been established in France, they were opposed by Hoche, whose talents were formidable; they were divided among themselves, and betrayed by traitors in whom they had placed implicit confidence, and La Vendée, notwithstanding the efforts of Charrette and Stoflet, could make but feeble efforts to assist them.

To suppose, as I have heard it asserted in America, and, as it was for very obvious reasons, reported in France, that the expedition was planned by the British government, with a view of bringing down destruction upon a number of gallant Frenchmen, and distinguished naval officers, is too ridiculous to be refuted. Those officers were already lost to France; the privates who composed the greater part of the regiments embarked were prisoners of war, and the expense at which the expedition sailed and the debarkation was effected, was enormous. Clothing and accoutrements for 30,000 men, proved but a part of the spoils which fell into the hands of the republicans.

Whatever our opinion may be of the motives which led to this fatal expedition, we must all admire the conduct of the principal individuals who

composed it ; among them were many of the clergy, nor did they yield to their military friends in magnanimity. It was by the side of the gallant Sombreuil, and with equal resolution that the venerable bishop of Dol met death. He had exhorted his brethren, on the day of the battle of Quiberon, not to embarrass the retreat of the soldiers, who were crowding into the boats of the English squadron, but to yield to their fate, and he now gave them the example of a mind not to be moved by the fear of death. Not even the presence of the victorious republicans under arms could restrain the tears and prayers of the country people on this occasion, nor have they ceased to venerate the spot on which the execution took place. It is called the field of martyrs, and pilgrimages are made to it from distant parts of Brittany.

The conduct pursued by general Hoche, in the last campaign of La Vendée, was such as deserved and as secured success. Bodies of light troops paraded the country in every direction, and whilst they gave not a moment's intermission to such as opposed them in arms, they extended protection and ensured tranquillity to all who submitted. Agents and spies too were sent in every direction through the country, who addressing themselves to the old and infirm, to the women, and to the priests, prevailed upon great numbers to submit ; nor did it require much exaggeration to alarm their fears with a representation of what might otherwise take place in their devoted country, and handsome of-

fers were made to Charêtte;\* but his unconquerable mind was not to be allured by promises of kind treatment and honourable conditions, or subdued by terror, and he still continued to resist, till repeated defeats had reduced his followers first to a few hundreds, and at length to about thirty. He was now incessantly pursued, and by people as well acquainted with the country as himself, from one hiding place to another; was frequently fired at, and once severely wounded in the arm, till at length a deserter from the republican army, who hoped to make his peace, betrayed him into the hands of general Travot, (1796.) After a short resistance against very superiour numbers, in which he was again wounded, he submitted, and taking a belt, which contained a considerable sum in gold, from about his waist, he presented it to the general, who very handsomely replied, "Keep your money, sir, you may yet have occasion for it, and I do not want it." When transferred before the military commission at Nantes, after having been carried in triumph through every street of the city, his request was, that they would save themselves the trouble and him the pain of any discussion; that he was ready to admit of whatever might constitute his guilt, as far as they chose to call it so, and to die, and when brought out to execution in a publick square of the city, his behaviour was such as became him; he would suffer no bandage over his eyes, and having

\* He was offered a million of livres, and a vessel to carry him wherever he chose.

opened his bosom he firmly gave the signal to fire, by dropping his handkerchief; the last words which faltered upon his lips were *vive le roi*. He is still remembered by numbers with respect and *affection*, and an engraving which is said to be very like him, is in great request. There is no name at bottom, but simply the representation of a Charrette. A nephew of his was so ill advised in 1805, as to attempt an insurrection in La Vendée. He was immediately taken, and died on the same spot where his uncle had met his fate, and with the same resolution. The rest of the family have been patronized by the emperor, who has promoted several of them in the army; and La Vendée is now a peaceable province of the empire. In addition to the little I have said of the war of La Vendee, it would be easy to give you some particulars of that of the Chouans, which are not generally known, but I feel that it is time to finish, and to take final leave of France, and I shall do so in a page or two.

A long period will elapse, I fear, before the French can feel the blessings of a permanent peace. The king of Prussia cannot much longer submit to his present humiliation; he has a numerous army, and may command the assistance of very powerful allies. I observe, however, that though very different opinions are entertained with respect to the event of a war between France and the king of Prussia, yet no one seems as if he would sympathise with the last in any disgrace, or disaster, that might befall him. Corrupted as the world is, there is yet

enough of virtue left to make all men despise those councils, which seem guided by the little miserable interests of the moment, and that monarch, who had been awed or bribed into inaction, when he might have preserved all Germany. Such conduct will meet with its proper reward. Perhaps he may be in his turn deserted, he may have to stand the contest alone, and the mighty fabrick of a military power, raised by the exertions of the great Frederick, may moulder away at the approach of Napoleon, as the body of Alexander the Great is said to have crumbled at the touch of Augustus. Russia, a power that France respects more, I believe, than any upon the continent which possesses an army, with an hundred thousand men of which, I have heard a French general of distinction say, he would not fear the devil himself, Russia is, however, assailable by weapons more dangerous than the sword, and will probably be the victim of that fondness for the language, the arts, the follies and the vices of France, which has long infected their nobility. Denmark is playing the same inferiour game that we are so prone to in America, and the energy of the king of Sweden is without that support in the affections of his people, which could alone render it of any efficacy. The aristocratick interest of the country cannot easily forget their former privileges, and the great body of the nation is said to entertain suspicions of their monarch's legitimacy. Portugal can hardly be mentioned in so rapid a sketch as I am making. They will probably have soon paid



all they could pay, as the price of their political existence, and the Portuguese minister said himself to our ambassadour, that he never went into the presence of the emperour without the dread of being insulted. As to Spain, the situation of that country is at this moment very critical. The Spain of ancient times, the Spain of the Cid, of Charles V., and even of Alberoni, whose energy, though ill directed, gave a momentary animation to the councils of Philip V., seems sunk in quiet and tame submission. Cervantes himself would weep at the success which has crowned his efforts to render chivalry a jest in his native country, and would agree that those splendid visions of the fancy which vanished at the touch of ridicule, might now be directed, could they be revived, to the best purposes of social security. In vain, however, have all the qualities of obedience and even of servility been exerted ; in vain have the ships of Spain been sacrificed, her millions expended, and the blood of her subjects lavished as it pleased the emperour of France, the suspicions of his malignant nature have not been disarmed. Rumours are in circulation of some secret correspondence between Spain and England ; they were invented, no doubt, to give a colour to some intended violence, and the downfall of the only remaining monarchy of the Bourbons is said to be at hand. No power upon the continent in short seems disposed to carry on the contest long with France, or able to carry it on successfully. The members of the Neapolitan and Sardinian roy-

al family have retired to Sicily and Sardinia, and the poor Calabrians, who are supporting the contest with king Joseph much in the same manner that the Corsicans supported a similar contest with France, must in the end submit as the Corsicans were forced to do. It is in England alone that mankind must look for redress and for assistance. With all their proneness to naval insolence, their ambition is mercantile, their prosperity is connected with the prosperity of others, their industry is no offence, their skill is no crime, and that they should be able to avail themselves of these, it is necessary that the rest of the world should be rich, and be at peace.\* The germ of freedom too can never be destroyed in their constitution, nor would a nation oppressed by their tyranny, ever want friends in the heart of their councils.† The ambition of France on the contrary, is altogether military, their spirit is that of conquest, their wars are for glory, their armies can be kept together by plunder alone, they must be fed, paid and clothed at the expense of others, and their government, whose policy has proved fatal to commerce and manufactories at home, seems at every moment ready to take vengeance on those who are inspired by different sentiments and

\* Le commerce extérieur ne peut prospérer si les nations étrangères ne sont elles mêmes riches et florissantes. Cette vérité si favorable à l'humanité commence à être généralement répandue, et les Négociants éclairés disent maintenant à tous les peuples de la terre. Augmentez votre population, car vous aurez plus de besoins, soyez plus riches, et nous vous vendrons davantage.

*Souvenirs et Portraits du Duc de Levis.*

† Tant qu'il y aura un parlement d'Angleterre, says the Abbé de Pradt, il y aura une tribune pour toute l'Europe.

cherish different views. What the event of the great struggle between these mighty powers will be, Heaven alone knows. The British, meanwhile, retain their ascendancy at sea, while Napoleon seems to consider the continent as his domain. The French troops are unquestionably among the best, and are at the same time the most numerous in Europe, and they abound in good officers, who are as much interested as their emperor in the preservation of his ascendancy ; but I still think that the fortitude of the great body of the army would not survive a signal defeat, could they but once believe, that their general is not the greatest in the world, and the peculiar favourite of fortune. I know of no other sentiment that would keep alive their energy, for he is not personally beloved as Henry IV. was, there are no remains, in his favour at least, of that spirit of fealty which attached the vassal to his lord, and the subject to his sovereign ; nor can the most enthusiastick Frenchman persuade himself that France is likely to be benefited by conquests in Istria and Dalmatia, in the north of Europe, or at the extremity of Italy. The navy is by no means as well attended to in France as the army ; their sailors, who are neither well disciplined, nor well taken care of, and who are badly paid, feel their inferiority to the British, and shrink from a contest even upon equal terms ; nor can it well be otherwise, while there is no commerce to serve as a school for seamanship, and while the larger vessels are more than two thirds of the time at anchor. I say nothing

to you of the finances of France, for my opportunities of knowledge upon that subject have been limited to what the newspapers afforded. I will only observe, that with a debt of seventy millions sterling, which is about a fifth of the ancient debt, under the monarchy, the revenue of the state is nearly double what it was, and that too at a time when the customs may be said to yield little or nothing. The last town we passed an hour in was St. Nazere, at the mouth of the Loire, and it was not without sensations in which somewhat of melancholy entered, that I felt myself stepping into the ship's boat with the certain knowledge that I should never more land in Europe. We sailed on the seventeenth of April, and had a great deal of stormy weather, being exposed to a narrow strip of easterly winds almost the whole way. The theory of the winds is still a very obscure one, and Dr. Franklin had too much sagacity not to have given up his ideas on the subject, had he found leisure in the latter part of his life, to turn his attention from politicks to subjects of natural philosophy. In addition to the disagreeable circumstances of bad weather and contrary winds, we were by no means as well accommodated as on board of captain B—; but our captain excused himself by assuring us, that the people who sold sea-stores in France were all cheats, and that a French fowl was twice as long getting its sea legs as an English or an American one. The most unpleasant circumstance which occurred was

the falling in with the British sloop of war *Ratler*, commanded by captain Mason ; they were from the foggy atmosphere of St. Johns, in Newfoundland ; they had not shared a shilling of prize money since they had been upon the station, and were extremely rapacious and ill behaved. I now saw for the first how oppressive power can render itself without proceeding to what may be deemed hostilities ; and how much the reputation and interests of a great nation may be trifled with by their unworthy servants. Our passage was a week longer than the one to France, and not in every respect as pleasant ; nor was the first sight of land, though very agreeable, yet quite as delightful as that of the mountains of Cape Ortegal had been ; it was the difference of romance and history, of splendid fiction and of sober truth. But I enjoyed extremely the surprise of some Frenchmen we had on board, when they were told, that the houses which they admired on either hand as we approached New-York were the property of farmers, who sold their produce at market, and who had probably cultivated the soil themselves.

Let a passenger arrive from whence he may, he must always be struck with the beautiful environs of New-York, and the reflection of a few moments upon what he has seen in other countries, will convince him, when he comes to know America, that one of the greatest of all blessings is to be born in a free country.

## POSTSCRIPT.

I WILL not presume to give even an abstract of the great and important events, which have occurred since these letters were brought to a close. The materials for that purpose are indeed accessible to every one, but little less than the energy and the style of Tacitus, and the lucid order of his narrative, would be necessary upon the occasion. A writer so gifted, and who like him could apply the science of Philosophy to the occurrences of History, might alone, with propriety, undertake the details of a period so abounding, to use the words of Tacitus himself, in surprising events, so tragical in battles, and in slaughter, and so full of fury and of faction. He alone might describe that immeasurable extravagance, that blind insanity of ambition, which so long tormented mankind, and heaped such multiplied and intolerable grievances upon the fairest parts of Europe. He alone could do justice to the nations of the peninsula, awakened, as it were, after a sleep of ages, to the most strenuous exertions; to Prussia, repelling by the arms of her own valiant sons, the insolent foe, before whom their monarch's mercenaries had fled; and to the warriors of the North, rolling back the tide of war upon the tyrant, chasing him from Russia, driving him out of Germany, beating him in France, dictating the terms of peace to him in his own Capital,

and dismissing him, as Odoacer dismissed Augustulus, to an annual stipend in a distant palace. And when the adventurer, whose assumption of empire had borne some semblance of election, and been sanctified by the abused rites of religion; whose alliances, an ancient and honourable house had, in a moment of distress, submitted to, proved by his conduct, that he had derived no good lesson from adversity, or been softened to a proper sense of his former enormities, by the commiseration he had experienced; when, bursting from his retreat, he threw himself into the arms of a licentious soldiery, yet hot with the spoils of Europe, and burning to be led back to a renewal of their former enjoyments of plunder and free quarters, the hand of Tacitus could alone attempt the narration. Nor could any other describe as they ought to be, the scenes which ensued, scenes which remind us of the Prætorian guards, triumphing over the apathy of a nation, sick of horror, and satiated with blood, crowning a favourite leader, and disposing of the Roman world. No other could give a proper sketch of that campaign, so rapid, and so decisively successful, or describe that battle, where honour and a good cause were opposed to despair, and on which the destinies of mankind depended.

But from scenes of this sort, I can conceive the satisfaction, with which the philosophical historian would advert to the consequences that have followed the battle of Waterloo, and describe the nations of Europe, as availing themselves of that aus-

picious event, and each building its future prosperity on the basis of civil and religious liberty. The equal rights and limited monarchy of France, the representative system, beginning to be understood and adopted in Germany, and in the Swiss aristocracies, and a Prussian Parliament convened by their own sovereign and assembled at Berlin, would in their turn command his admiration and respect. What he would say of America, arraying itself on the side of the common enemy of mankind, it is not for me to suppose, but I may be allowed to imagine, that whilst he lamented the infatuation of our leaders, he would yet paint in glowing colours the valour and the patriotism of this rising nation. I can imagine too, when treating of the efforts of Great Britain in the late contest, a contest as unparalleled in its duration and extent, as it was glorious in its termination, how bright a picture he would draw of those advantages, which result from the protection of agriculture and of commerce, from a well understood administration of justice, and from a form of government, in which the energies of democracy, aristocracy, and monarchy are so happily combined.

The storms and tempests, says a celebrated writer, which superstition formerly referred to the wrath of heaven, and the agency of evil spirits, and in which disorder and confusion alone were visible, are now known to preserve the equilibrium of our atmosphere, and to fit it for the purposes of life ; they are now demonstrated by science to be the ministration of divine intelligence.



It is thus in the political world, the triumph of vice, the degradation of every art and science to the purposes of tyranny and oppression, the downfall of nations, and the waste of human life, had deformed the face of Europe, and society seemed fast returning to the ignorance and ferocity of the earlier ages ; “but the long agony is over,” reason and religion have reassumed their sway, the crimes and errours of the past seem expiated, and the experience of all mankind now vindicates the ways of God.

**THE END.**







